Social Movements and Political Violence in Northern Ireland and the United States

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Summary

This thesis deals with two cases of insurgent organisations that incorporated violent methods in their repertoire in the late sixties and the early seventies. The first case is that of Northern Ireland, where protests and counter-protests escalated into a violent conflict known as the Troubles. The second case is that of United States, during the same period. In both cases, there was first a nonviolent civil right movement which then fragmented and was superseded by groups endorsing more confrontational forms of protest. Despite many similarities in the initial phases of protest in both locations, violent political conflict ensued only in Northern Ireland. In the United States, confrontation peaked at the very end of the sixties, and then declined rapidly in early seventies. The aim of the thesis is to identify reasons for this difference. Social movement theory is used as the theoretical framework of the thesis. The organisations studied are the Weather Underground, the Black Panther Party, the Black Liberation Army and the Provisional IRA.

Personal narrative analysis is used to study the material. The primary material consists of six autobiographies. Other personal accounts, government reports, contemporary newspaper articles and secondary research literature are used as complementary material.

Both Northern Ireland and the United States were characterised by horizontal inequality. In Northern Ireland, however, inequality was not only socio-economic but also more clearly political. Movement fragmentation, rivalry and violent outbidding also had a significant impact on the escalation of conflict. Violent protest seems to be more likely to emerge in places where the level of state repression is not the harshest imaginable, but where opportunities to demand change through litigation are nonetheless limited. How state authorities then react to protests has significant impact on whether further radicalisation takes place. Overt, dramatic and widely publicised repression usually backfires, weakening the peaceful segments of the movement while strengthening the radical fringes. Violence tends to escalate if the conditions are such that there is acceptance of violent protest among wider population and especially if groups in these conditions end up competing with one another through violent outbidding. Any country's best preventive measure against political violence is to reinforce its legitimacy through genuinely democratic and liberal practices both in its domestic affairs and its foreign relations.

Contents

1 List of Acronyms

BLA Black Liberation Army
BPP Black Panther Party
CSJ Campaign for Social Justice
IRA Irish Republican Army
NICRA Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association
NILP Northern Ireland Labour Party
PIRA Provisional IRA
PL/PLP Progressive Labor Party
RUC Royal Ulster Constabulary
RYM Revolutionary Youth Movement
SDS Students for a Democratic Society
SDLP Social Democratic and Labour Party

In this thesis, upper case is being used for terms like Republican and Unionist when they refer to organisations and members of organisations designating themselves as such. Lower case is being used when the term refers to general support for the ideology in question.

2 Introduction

Why and when does political protest become violent? When asked why they have joined an insurgent movement or organisation, most people in most countries will probably refer to grievances – discrimination, poverty, oppression, lack of prospects. However, while these grievances may very well be real, an answer referring to them does not tell us very much in itself. At any given time, one will be able to find many people who are deeply unhappy about something, and yet it is only occasionally that the result is radicalisation and escalation of conflict. In this thesis, I look into two cases of protest movements that incorporated violent methods in their repertoire in the late sixties and the early seventies, yielding very different outcomes. The first case is that of Northern Ireland and the second one that of United States.

Research on political violence consists of several levels of analysis. There is the individual level (e.g. "Are there personality traits that are common among terrorists?"), the group level (e.g. "How do individuals join terrorist organisations?"), approaches which focus on society-wide factors (e.g. "Does poverty cause terrorism?"), and the international or world system level (e.g. "Do shifts in the global power structure have an impact the occurrence of political violence?") In this thesis, I look into political violence as a social movement phenomenon, which means my analysis will focus on group-level dynamics and societal factors.

In some strands of terrorism studies, there has been a tendency to isolate the object of interest from the wider political and social context and emphasise the difference between "normal" activism and violent behaviour. That is, the more radical the forms of protest, the greater the likelihood that analysis will revolve around assumed individual psychopathologies. Theories on an alleged "terrorist personality" became more common in the seventies and the eighties especially in the United States. (della Porta 2006, 7) Most of these writings drew their basic tenets from the psychoanalytic tradition and were not based on any empirical studies. Unconscious drives originating from childhood experiences – especially from those of abuse – and hostility towards one's parents were believed to be the key factors explaining the "psychopathology of terrorism". (Borum 2004, 18) Lloyd deMause, for instance, has argued that the roots of terrorism lie "not in

this or that American foreign policy error, but in the extremely abusive families of the terrorists". (deMause 2002, 340)

Another factor often highlighted in these formulations is narcissism and "narcissistic rage" in particular. The idea of a connection between narcissism and terrorism was first put forward by Gustav Morf (1970) and has later been discussed by John W. Crayton (1983), Richard Pearlstein (1991) and others. According to this reasoning, individuals who become terrorists have been traumatised as children, which has created feelings of fear, humiliation and vulnerability that have become central to their self-image and resulted in so-called narcissistic injury. In order to create a more tolerable sense of self, a narcissistic person devaluates the worth of others. Anything that might threaten to shatter the fragile façade of self-worth may trigger narcissistic rage.

Despite the wide interest in the "terrorist personality", studies on the subject have yet to provide any cogent evidence, and the influence of psychoanalytic approaches has decreased in later research. Today, it is generally accepted that although personality traits may have an impact on an individual's readiness to use violence, there is no clear set of attributes that could explain terrorism in any context. As Martha Crenshaw notes, "the outstanding common characteristic of terrorists is their normality". (Crenshaw 1981, 390)

Before the 1970s, research on protest movements, on the other hand, was dominated by accounts of collective behaviour that conceptualised protest movements as products of grievances or social strain. William Kornhauser (1959), for example, argues that it is alienation from what he terms mass society that is likely to motivate individuals to participate in collective action. According to Kornhauser, "mass society is objectively the *atomized* society, and subjectively the *alienated* population. Therefore, mass society is a system in which there is *high availability of a population for mobilization by elites.* […] *In short, people who are atomized readily become mobilized*" (Kornhauser 1959, 33, emphasis in original).

The assumption that more grievances inevitably means more protest does not stand up to scrutiny, however. If we assume that protest movements are simply reactions to grievances, then a society with increasing welfare and a growing middle class should see less grievances and thus less protest. There are, however, several examples where the

expansion of the middle class has been accompanied with an increase rather that decrease of protest movements. Under conditions of absolute deprivation, it is usually the sheer struggle for survival that fills people's daily lives so that although they most definitely have the motive to engage in political protest, they lack the means to do so. Individuals and groups who take part in protest movements are usually not the worst off, but rather have some resources at their disposal. It is obvious, then, that there must be other factors at play.

To explain the aforementioned discrepancy, several theorists have suggested it is not deprivation *per se* that matters. Ted Gurr (1970) views the relative deprivation experienced by a group as a central factor in explaining the emergence of contention. Relative deprivation can mean either a) deprivation in relation to others or b) deprivation in relation to people's own expectations. The latter variant of relative deprivation is known especially from James Davies' J-curve theory of revolutions (1962). According to Davies, "revolutions are most likely to occur when a prolonged period of objective economic and social development is followed by a short period of sharp reversal". (Ibid.: 6)

Gurr and Davies were not the first authors to stress the relevance of expectations, however. In fact, as early as 1856, Alexis de Tocqueville wrote:

> *Revolutions are not always brought about by a gradual decline from bad to worse. Nations that have endured patiently and almost unconsciously the most overwhelming oppression, often burst into rebellion against the yoke the moment it begins to grow lighter. The regime which is destroyed by a revolution is almost always an improvement on its immediate predecessor.* […] *Evils which are patiently endured when they seem inevitable, become intolerable once the idea of escape from them is suggested.* (Tocqueville 1955 [1856], 214)

These explanations suggest there is a relatively straightforward process whereby social conditions motivate individuals to challenge the prevailing state of affairs. The evidence is somewhat mixed, however. In their study on terrorism in 17 Latin American countries between 1980 and 1995, Andreas Feldmann and Maiju Perälä found that acts of domestic terrorism were more likely to occur in countries characterised by human rights

violations.[1] However, "neither factors associated with economic performance nor structural economic inequality display a robust relation to nongovernmental terrorist activity". (Feldmann & Perälä 2001, 18-19) J. L. P. Thompson's study of political violence in Northern Ireland also suggests that socio-economic fluctuations are mostly irrelevant in explaining changes in the occurrence of violence. In fact, Thomson found that in the case of Northern Ireland, when security force levels were controlled, rising unemployment correlated positively with *decreasing* levels of lethal violence. (Thompson 1989, 694) Likewise, in their study on social conditions and support for conflict in Northern Ireland, Ian McAllister and Richard Rose found that "even though Northern Ireland is a society in which each conflicting group is divided internally along all conventional dimensions of social differentiation, these social cleavages correlate very weakly or not at all with support for political conflict". (McAllister & Rose 1983, 547) After the attacks of September 11th, several scholars have also pointed out that quite many jihadists are educated and have a middle class or upper class background.[2]

Then again, the fact that many individual terrorists are educated and economically comfortable does not necessarily mean there is no correlation whatsoever between political violence and poverty at a country-wide level. Using data for the period 1945 – 1999 on the 161 countries that had a population of at least half a million in 1990, James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin find that poverty is one of the clearest risk factors for civil war. However, they argue that the correlation between low per capita income and civil war is explained not by grievances but by the prevalence of financially and bureaucratically weak governments in poor countries:

> *We hypothesize that financially, organizationally, and politically weak central governments render insurgency more feasible and attractive due to weak local policing or inept and corrupt counterinsurgency practices. These often include a propensity for brutal and indiscriminate retaliation that helps drive noncombatant locals into rebel forces. Police and*

[1] On the other hand, their analysis also shows that "nongovernmental terrorism in Latin America has been more prevalent in regimes characterized by *more* political and civil liberties as measured by the Freedom House scale". (Feldmann & Perälä 2001, 17, emphasis added) This may seem somewhat inconsistent, but the latter finding makes sense considering that the most repressive regimes set up surveillance systems and restrict freedom of information and association to such an extent that it becomes very difficult for terrorist organisations – or any nongovernmental organisation for that matter – to operate.

[2] See, for example: Krueger & Malečkova 2002; Gambetta & Hertog 2016.

> *counterinsurgent weakness, we argue, is proxied by a low per capita income.* (Fearon & Laitin 2003, 75–76)

Several scholars have also pointed out that both poverty and democracy seem to be connected to terrorism in a nonlinear manner. Results naturally vary depending on whether it is domestic or transnational terrorism that is being discussed. According to Walter Enders, Gary A. Hoover and Todd Sandler:

> *[T]errorist attacks are most concentrated at a middle-income range that varies in a predictable fashion according to the sample examined. For example, terrorist attacks peaked at a lower per capita income level for the perpetrators' country than for the venue country. Thus, the low per capita GDP rationale for terrorism is more descriptive of the perpetrators' home country. When the leftist terrorists were a greater influence prior to 1993, the peak per capita income level for transnational terrorist incidents was higher than when the religious fundamentalist and nationalist/separatist terrorist groups became a greater influence after 1993.* (Enders et al. 2016, 220)

Curvilinear associations between democracy and wealth and domestic and transnational terrorism are also found by Peter Kurrild-Klitgaard et al. (2006), Alberto Abadie (2006) and others.

In addition to the enabling conditions in poor countries, a further issue that makes measuring more complicated is the difference between vertical inequality (inequality between individuals) and horizontal inequality (inequality between groups). In her study on horizontal inequality and Palestinian support for armed resistance, Solveig Hillesund found that "higher perceived status of civil and political rights is associated with a lower probability of supporting violent over nonviolent resistance", and that individuals were also "more likely to support violent over nonviolent resistance the larger the difference in household expenditure and consumer durable ownership between their own region and the closest Israeli subdistrict". Differences in educational attainment, however, had no corresponding effect. (Hillesund 2015, 76)

To sum, it seems that there are some indications of a positive correlation between political violence and inequality that is both horizontal and political by nature, but less so of a straightforward connection between socio-economic deprivation and political violence. As always, what you get depends on what you measure. The link between grievances and

political violence is complex and not easily generalisable into a comprehensive theory. It is possible that socio-economic inequality – especially horizontal – plays a part in the dynamics that make political violence more likely, but mostly in conjunction with other factors. Insofar as poverty is known to "cause" terrorism, it is because of the conditions that render insurgency easier in countries with lower per capita income.

2.1 On Terminology

One of the reasons for differing research findings is that even the most central concepts have different definitions. "Political violence" and especially "terrorism" are loaded terms without any unambiguous, widely accepted definitions. In fact, Alex P. Schmid and Alber J. Jongman found no less than 109 different definitions for terrorism. They organised the definitions into 22 word categories[3], and yet:

> *The question is whether the above list contains all the elements necessary for a good definition. The answer is probably "no". Some elements overlap, while others might be missing.* (Schmid & Jongman 2005, 5–6)

Groups and individuals are typically labelled as terrorist when their ultimate aims and values are something the speaker disagrees with. What most understandings have in common, however, is the notion that terrorism is violence or threat of violence that is used against non-combatants in order to advance political, ideological or religious objectives and that it is symbolic by nature. That is, although the motives of individual acts of terrorism may include practical considerations, the ultimate aim of this form of violence is to influence wider audiences, especially by inducing fear.

On a related note, there is a meandering debate on how the term "violence" should be understood in social sciences. In the narrowest sense, violence can be defined as deliberate use of physical force with the intention to inflict pain. However, many conceptualisations of violence also recognise its psychological and emotional

[3] For example, words like "purposive", "planned", "systematic" and "organized action" formed one category.

manifestations, while the broadest definitions – often using the term "structural violence" – also include factors such as economic inequality and social vulnerability.

As to the definition of *political* violence, there is also disagreement over issues such as whether destruction of property or infrastructure should be considered violence in this context, and over the degree to which harmful action has to be intentional in order to count as violence.[4] In practice, these questions are difficult and many-sided, and verdicts tend to change depending on whose side the debaters are on, but one rule of thumb is that in order for an act to be considered political violence, there has to be a possibility that the action could also result in people being killed or injured. In other words, the definition does not depend on whether causing human casualties was the explicitly stated intention. This means that minor acts of vandalism like trashing bus shelters and breaking shop windows do not count as political violence (regardless of whether the stated motive is political), whereas planting a bomb in a building in a densely populated area necessarily does, even if an advance warning call is being made, because that is an act that could result in human casualties.

In this thesis, I use a relatively broad definition of political violence. It includes all politically motivated acts in which physical force is intentionally used to injure or kill people *or* to damage or destroy property, the latter variant being done in a manner that puts other people at risk of death or injury. What is key, in other words, is that there is acceptance of the fact that people may be killed or injured because of the action taken. Conceptualised this way, political violence includes not only full-blown warfare but also acts like arson, torture, rape, bombings, assassinations and assaults. In principle, actions by state actors can also be described as political violence if they meet the aforementioned criteria. This thesis, however, focuses on non-state actors.

2.2 Cases and Sources

In this thesis, I look into two cases of insurrectionary movements that incorporated violent methods in their repertoire. The first case is that of Northern Ireland, where the local civil

[4] Consider, for example, a situation in which the initial aim of a given group is to blow up a building without causing any civilian casualties, but something goes awry and civilian casualties are caused anyway.

rights movement was initially reformist and nonviolent, but where protests and counter-protests eventually escalated into a violent conflict known as the Troubles. My second case is that of United States, during the same period. In the United States, the local civil rights movement had emerged earlier – and it inspired that of Northern Ireland – but political contention increased and became more confrontational in the late sixties, above all because of the Vietnam War.

In both of these cases, there were several groups, both nonviolent and militant, that operated during this time period. I am going to focus especially on the Weather Underground, the Black Panther Party, the Black Liberation Army and the Provisional IRA. The Weather Underground has usually been defined as a leftist revolutionary group committed to overthrowing the US government and breaking down the American imperialist system. It has been compared to groups like the Red Army Faction in West Germany, the Red Brigades in Italy, and Action Directe in France. The Provisional IRA, on the other hand, is regarded as an ethno-nationalist group, engaged in ending the British rule in Northern Ireland and reunifying the island of Ireland. It is usually compared to other ethno-nationalist groups such as the ETA. The Black Panther Party and the Black Liberation Army were both ethno-nationalist and revolutionary left-wing. The history of African-Americans makes these organisations a rather special case in that black liberation has been conceptualised in various different ways. There have been groups like the Republic of New Afrika, which called for territorial separatism and the creation of a separate nation-state for African Americans in southeastern United States. For the majority of African-Americans, however, this was not the goal. BPP and BLA adopted elements in their ideologies, rhetoric and methods from both nationalist liberation movements and socialist revolutionaries.

I decided to do a comparative study because even though there is plenty of research on political protest and political violence in each of the two locations at the time, few studies compare them. I find this lack of interest somewhat odd considering that the connections and the similarities are so clearly there. While it is true that in general, Northern Ireland and the United States are obviously different in quite many regards, what is similar in these cases is the movement – its aspirations, slogans, tactics, choices of framing and so on. In both cases, there was first a nonviolent, reformist civil rights movement that sought to tackle discrimination and defend the rights and freedoms of all citizens. Both

movements initially had quite similar goals and tactics, using the judicial system to counter discrimination. In both cases, movements were confronted with repression and police brutality that angered both activists and previously unaffiliated audiences. In both cases, the authorities also killed unarmed civilians, the most well-known incidents being the Orangeburg massacre in 1968 and the Kent State shootings in 1970, both in the United States, and Bloody Sunday in Northern Ireland in 1972. In both cases, the reformist, moderate line was challenged by a more confrontational one by the late sixties. In both cases, movement fragmentation, infighting and rivalry ensued.

In both cases, there are relational factors – opportunities and constraints of the political system, competition between groups and within them, and the interaction between the activists, the police and counter-movements – that explain how and when radicalisation happened.

Despite these similarities, however, wider political conflict ensued only in Northern Ireland. In the United States, confrontation peaked at the very end of the sixties, and then declined rapidly in early seventies. The aim of this thesis is to identify reasons for this difference. As the theoretical framework of my thesis, I use social movement theory.

Because of the questions I am asking in this thesis, using qualitative methods seemed like a reasonable option. Quantitative methods typically rely on large samples, and when it comes to clandestine organisations and their illegal activities, large, statistically representative samples are naturally either impossible or very difficult to obtain.

My primary material consists of six autobiographies. In quantitative work, six books would be considered way too small a sample for anything. Qualitative research, however, typically aims to explain things in a way that requires a more in-depth take on the material. A significantly greater number of autobiographies would have been difficult to incorporate into the analysis in any sensible way. As it stands, the material is detailed enough to justify a relatively small sample size.

The authors of my six autobiographies are Kieran Conway, Maria McGuire, Tommy McKearney, Mark Rudd, David Gilbert and Assata Shakur. The oldest of the

autobiographies – the one by McGuire – was published in 1973. The most recent one is the one written by Conway. It was published in 2014.

I had several criteria for including an autobiography in my material. Firstly, the member in question had joined the organisation early on, that is to say, in the late sixties or the early seventies. I chose not to use autobiographies like the one written by Eamon Collins[5], who joined the Provisional IRA only in the late 1970s. A further criterion for using an autobiography was that the author had to be directly involved in the illegal activities of the group. This means I chose not to use memoirs of law enforcement officers, defence lawyers, politicians, former faculty members, family members or sympathisers, although there are plenty of these available. Reflections written by activists like Bernadette Devlin (who was active in the early civil rights movement but never joined the Provisional IRA) and Jonah Raskin (who assisted the Weather Underground but was never part of the core group) were used as complementary material. In addition to the data of the autobiographies and other personal accounts, I also used government reports, contemporary newspaper articles and secondary research literature.

2.3 Personal Narrative Analysis

Among political scientists and historians there are also those who regard personal narratives with some suspicion, and dismiss this kind of material as anecdotal. "Hard science" is often thought to be based on data that represents an aggregate or an average of an entire population or a specific subgroup. As Maynes, Pierce and Laslett point out, "such analytic logics are comfortable with claims made on the basis of probability, but less so with contingency; they are equipped to handle the average but not the individual case". (Maynes et al. 2008, 127)

It is, of course, absolutely true that personal narratives can never portray things as they "really were". First of all, life history narrators may be tempted to omit memories that are painful or embarrassing, or to portray things in a way that is somehow beneficial to them. Even if the narrator is completely sincere, a life history is never "the full truth", not merely

[5] Collins, Eamon. 1998. *Killing Rage.* London: Granta Books.

for the simple reason that human memory is known to be quite unreliable, but also because of the limits of one's personal realm of experience.

Then again, as critics of positivistic epistemology have pointed out, it is a fallacy to assume that a social scientist could ever be a strictly objective observer who merely uncovers indisputable, definite, "pure" facts, since there are no facts as opposed to narrative. In other words, all information necessarily comes from somewhere, from a place, time, and point of view, transmitted through language and received and interpreted by human beings, and thus cannot really be neatly separated from "mere" narrative. Even when data is presented in numbers, those numbers never "speak for themselves"; it is human beings who decide which are the numbers that matter and what they mean in practice.

The problem with much of the research on narratives is captured rather well by R.W. Connell, according to whom:

> *[t]here is a tendency, in recent discussions of method, to treat any story as a fiction; to "read" it for the figures of speech, motivated silences and narrative devices by which the teller as author constructs a meaningful tale. Any serious researcher using life-histories must be aware of these features of stories. But if the language is all we can see, then, we are missing the point of a life-history – and spurning the effort the respondents themselves make to speak the truth.* […] *This evidence is not necessarily easy to use; it takes time and effort to examine the story from different angles and compare it with other evidence.* (quoted in Maynes et al. 2008, 149)

Treating personal narratives as evidence instead of fiction does not mean that one should take at face value all claims made by the narrators. I evaluated the reliability of a statement by looking at whether it recurred in several different autobiographies and whether the claim was supported by any other documents or secondary literature. Statements that seemed vague or inconsistent or were made by only one individual were taken with a pinch of salt. Naturally, any rendition of past events must be evaluated against its possible motives in the present. I was particularly sceptical of all statements that touched upon the issue of individual guilt. This is not to say I treated them as lies; it is simply that the issue was not relevant for this study.

One question I had to decide was how to present my material. The idea is not to simply repeat the stories told by narrators, and due to space limitations, including a vast number of lengthy quotes would be out of the question anyway. On the other hand, in order to present a credible interpretation, the original story also needs to be available for the reader in some form. Here I found Amy Kaler's comment very useful:

> *The most interesting uses of personal narratives occur when the narratives form the basis for the scholar's work, and are supplemented by other forms of representation. This usually means that the narratives are presented verbatim (or close to verbatim) and in good-sized chunks. The size and presentation of these chunks will vary according to the format of the text (article, monograph, experimental vs. traditional writing). However, I think the narratives should be long enough and central enough to convey to the reader some of the atmosphere of the times and places of the narrative, and to let the reader see how processes like cause and effect, action/reaction, or gradual coming to fruition work themselves out in the narrator's life.* (quoted in Maynes et al. 2008, 144)

In practice, this means that although it is the analyst's job to interpret the narrative, it cannot be done in any credible way without also presenting the reader with parts of the story itself. It enables the reader to assess whether the interpretation offered is a sound one. I use direct quotes to make my logic more transparent and to illustrate my arguments. The text goes back and forth between the individual narratives and the analysis. Maynes and others compare this to the presentation of a summary table in support of an argument based on quantitative data: "In both cases, the reader views some of the data that has already been forcibly shaped by the analyst." (Maynes et al. 200, 144)

As to the actual work process, in the first phase of my work I read the autobiographies, made notes of central topics and created a small case study of each individual story. In each of the case studies, I looked into a few factors in particular: 1) the conditions under which the individual first joined the movement and then the group in question; 2) specific events that they themselves describe as decisive for their radicalisation and deeper engagement in violence; 3) events and factors that either hindered further engagement or resulted in disengagement; 4) interaction with authorities 5) internal dynamics within the movement and the group in question 6) interaction with counter-movements. 7) framing and resources.

In the second phase, I looked for similarities and differences in the relevant parts of the stories. Again, I used the tools provided by social movement theory to analyse the narratives.

3 Social Movement Theory and Contentious Politics

Social movement theory has questioned both the causal centrality of grievances and the explanatory power of the "terrorist mind" in explaining the emergence of political violence. Grievances are typically seen as a necessary but insufficient explanation. In order to launch and sustain organised collective action, movements need resources – both material and symbolic – and a support base. Social movement theory has revolved around theoretical perspectives of resource mobilisation, political opportunity, and framing. According to approaches highlighting resource mobilisation, social movements have to be able to motivate their followers, because individuals participate in collective action only if the benefits of doing so are greater than the costs. The concept of political opportunity, on the other hand, emerged as a way to analyse the wider political environment in which movements operate. Movements emerge not only because they succeed in mobilising resources, but because the prevailing political or social conditions are favourable for protest.

Framing refers to the symbolic and rhetorical side of contention. In order to gain popularity and power, groups need to make claims that somehow resonate with prevailing narratives in society. Most contemporary social-scientific research rejects the idea of an autonomous realm of signification and considers meaning formation as something that takes place in social interaction. The concept of framing is based on Erving Goffman's work (1974) and it is used to describe the ways in which actors construct issues and identities. The entire problematique of meanings, choices and identities is expressed rather eloquently by Doug McAdam (2001, 131) and others:

> *Humans come to believe in a world full of continuous, neatly bounded, self-propelling individuals whose intentions interact with accidents and natural limits to produce all of social life.* […] *Closely observed, however, the same humans turn out to be interacting repeatedly with others, renegotiating who they are, adjusting the boundaries they occupy, modifying their actions in rapid response to other people's reactions, selecting among and altering available scripts* […] *yet responding predictably to their locations within webs of social relations they themselves cannot map in detail. They tell stories about themselves and others that facilitate their social interaction rather than laying out verifiable facts about individual lives.*

In practice, of course, the boundaries between the aforementioned approaches are blurry. Scholars often focus on factors that cannot be neatly categorised as, say, a resource mobilisation issue only.

To sum, within social movement studies, political violence is thus seen as a result of the interaction between a social movement and the other actors in its environment. For a long time, however, new approaches to social movements paid relatively little attention to political violence. Scholars studying social movements tended to focus on peaceful, reformist movements. In the past twenty years or so, however, a new stream of research on radicalisation and political violence has emerged. What characterises the so-called *contentious politics* paradigm formulated especially by Charles Tilly (2003, 2007), Doug McAdam (2001) and Sidney Tarrow (1998) is a stronger emphasis on the contextualisation of violence. In other words, violence is considered as one form of confrontation within a wider repertoire of actions. The perspective underlines that actors are embedded in a relational field that includes various kinds of actors from counter-movements and state-actors to audiences and rivals. Recent research on contentious politics has dealt with factors like state repression, intra-movement rivalry, resources, conflict diffusion, and framing of issues and identities.

Tilly (2003, 5) argues that analysts of human violence can be divided roughly into three camps: idea people, behaviour people and relation people. Idea people claim that people acquire their beliefs, values and ideas from their environments and that ideas concerning, for example, the worth of others or the overall acceptability of aggression are seen as having a significant impact on the propensity of a person to take part in violent actions. In order to end violence, according to this reasoning, we must eliminate destructive ideas.

Behaviour people, on the other hand, stress the autonomy of motives and impulses. They often take a reductionist position, arguing that all collective phenomena sum up nothing but individual behaviour. Many of them favour evolutionary explanations or economistic stances. Relation people see transactions among individuals and groups more central than the other two. They argue that individuals develop their personalities, beliefs, values and practices through interaction with others. They make concessions to the impact of

individual propensities but insist that collective processes have distinct properties. As an observant reader may already guess, Tilly locates himself in the camp of the relation people.

3.1 Diffusion

Diffusion means a dynamic that involves spread of tactics, frames, slogans, ideas, campaigns or social practices across borders and cultures, to different actors, groups or communities. It can take place either through direct or indirect linkages. Direct diffusion refers to transmission through channels which involve direct and frequent contact between actors that belong to different sites. In the case of indirect diffusion, there is indirect and informal interaction between adopter and transmitter through media.

Interest in diffusion of political violence has increased in the past years above all because of studies on transnational islamist terrorism. A central claim made by many of these researchers is that today's networked terrorism is something entirely different from all previous waves of political violence. While there surely is reason to focus on dynamics of diffusion today, radicalisation processes were, however, rarely isolated in the past either. On the other hand, diffusion relates not only to spread of political violence, but to disengagement also. The peace process in Northern Ireland, for instance, is said to be relevant for the disengagement process of the ETA. (Bosi 2014, 17)

One example of diffusion which is also relevant for my study is the political turmoil of year 1968. This year saw an intensification of popular protests in many countries around the world. Reasons were partly similar and partly different. Context was different in each country, but ideas, slogans and tactics travelled from one place to another. In Northern Ireland, the beginning of the Troubles is related to local civil rights activism and the unionist backlash that ensued.

Closely related to diffusion is what Tilly and Tarrow describe as scale shift. It is a process that not only diffuses protest across borders and communities, but gives birth to new coordination at a higher or lower level than that of its initiation. (Tilly & Tarrow 2007, 94) Like diffusion in general, upward scale shift can also operate in two different ways: either through direct diffusion through groups and individuals whose existing contacts

become the basis of their mobilisation, or through a mediated route. According to authors, upward scale shift is one of the most significant processes in contentious politics:

> *It moves contention beyond its local origins, touches on the interest and values of new actors, involves a shift of venue to sites where contention may be more or less successful, and can threaten other actors or entire regimes.* (Tilly & Tarrow 2007, 95)

Since upward scale shift leads to new coordination at a different level, it makes a great difference to contention. In many cases, scale shift has furthered the institutionalisation of protest.

3.2 Interaction between Movement and Authorities

States react to social movements in different ways. They can make concessions to the movement, staunchly resist the changes demanded, repress by force the organisations or the individuals making the claims or deliberately induce disagreement within the movement. They can try to appropriate the movement or parts of it and dilute the protest that way. They can also respond with some kind of combination of the aforementioned ways.

Developing successful counterterrorism measures is a central concern of policymakers. A difficult question is, however, how to determine when state responses to radicalisation and terrorism may in fact increase the likelihood of further radicalisation and result in security losses instead of gains.

The term "backfire" has been used in studies dealing with the dynamics of mobilisation and state repression. David Hess and Brian Martin define backfire as *"a public reaction of outrage to an event that is publicized and perceived as unjust"*. (Hess & Martin 2006, 250) Lasse Lindekilde, on the other hand, has studied backfire caused by long-term counterterrorism policies rather than singular events. He lists two necessary conditions and two mediating conditions that must be met for backfire to take place. As to necessary conditions, "knowledge of counterterrorist policies is communicated and received by target groups, or the implementation of policies experienced in practice". (Lindekilde

2014, 52) Secondly, there must be a perception among target groups that the counterterrorist policies taken are unjust, excessive or disproportional. As to mediating conditions, what also matters is, firstly, whether the state is able to cover up injustices and represent repressive measures as legitimate law enforcement, and secondly, whether the general public shares the view that the measures taken are unjust, excessive or disproportional.

3.3 Intra-Movement Interaction

Social movement organisations have to compete over scarce resources in order to survive and be able to remain active. The most crucial resources are participation and acceptance from constituencies, supporters and bystanders, which gives competition a triangular dynamic: Competing organisations aim to outbid their rivals in winning support from a third party, whose reactions play an important part in the process. Competition is often strongest when it takes place between organisations that have similar goals and target groups. Scholars of political process have broadened this picture by looking into the role played by external actors and their ways of encouraging or inhibiting splits within protest movements. (Bosi et al. 2014, 8)

Existing research indicates that rivalry takes place in different patterns and does not necessarily lead to radicalisation. In order to understand the dynamics of competition in the context of political violence, it is necessary to identify patterns and implications of competition that involve violence. Violent outbidding, for instance, involves a dynamic in which groups gain attention when they escalate violent attacks, and may also gain approval from core-followers, but at the same time they face the risk of provoking counter-attacks and alienating broader audiences. (Bosi et al. 2014, 9)

Donatella della Porta links inter-organisational competition to *cycles of protest*, i.e. to the patterns in which movements diffuse, expand, radicalise, institutionalise and decline. (della Porta 2014, 94) Diffusion happens at the beginning of a cycle, as the first groups to emerge lower the threshold for others. Spin-off movements tend to contribute to the mobilisation of other groups, enlarging the protest claims, but also provoking adversaries to form their own coalitions.

Repertoires of collective action tend to change at different phases of the cycle. Radicalisation is generated by competition both between movement activists and opponents and within the social movement. Competition tends to intensify during cycles of protest, as groups split over the best strategies to adopt. During phases of declining mobilisation, as many activists withdraw and public attention decreases, organisations end up competing over a shrinking pool of recruits and supporters, which intensifies rivalry between them. Analysing the evolution of violent protest in Italy, della Porta and Tarrow observed:

> *Violence tends to appear from the very beginning of a protest cycle. In this phase, it is usually represented by less purposive forms of action and it is used by large groups of protesters. Clashes with adversaries or police during mass actions are the more widely diffused types of political violence during the height of the cycle and decline at its end. In the last phase, aggression carried out by small groups of militants and direct attacks on persons become more frequent. The more dramatic forms of violence rise when the mass phase of the protest cycle declines. To put it differently, as mass mobilization winds down, political violence rises in magnitude and intensity.* (della Porta & Tarrow 1986, 620)

Della Porta also argues that state repression can exacerbate intra-movement divisions and that states often deliberately aim to do so.

Internal conflicts are common in social movements, and certain degree of intra-movement competition is always expected. Gianluca De Fazio argues that competition only leads to radicalisation if the mechanism of political outbidding is triggered. In Northern Ireland, adopting a radical position was useful above all because there was a definite demand for militancy among constituent groups, which was also a result state-repression and interactions with counter-movements. (De Fazio 2014, 116-118) Interestingly, Stephen Nemeth (2014) found that the outcome of competition between terrorist groups depends also on the ideology of the organisations. According to his findings, nationalist and religious groups tend to respond to competition with more violence, left-wing organisations with *less*.[6] The reason for this is not entirely clear.

[6] It is important to note that Nemeth's study is specifically about rivalry between terrorist organisations, not about intra-movement rivalry in general.

3.4 Counter-movements

According to a study by Brian J. Phillips (2015), contrary to the wishes of many governments, violent rivalries between terrorist groups can contribute to their longevity. However, according to Phillips' findings, when rivalries are disaggregated by type, it is only interfield rivalries – rivalries between groups that have substantially different goals – that are positively associated with group longevity. The reason for this remains unclear.[7]

There are several ways in which interfield rivalry can contribute to the longevity of the groups. First, because of violent rivalry, previously unaffiliated civilians may choose a side – either because they are coerced to do so or because attacks on a group inspire public sympathy. Support given by civilians can be crucial for militant groups as they are often dependent on support networks for safe houses, information, and new recruits.

A second reason for why violent rivalry can contribute to group longevity is that competition can spur learning and innovation. Competition forces groups to adopt new tactics in order to survive, and although cooperative relationships are usually mentioned as an example of those that facilitate learning, rivals learn from each other as well.

Third, violent rivalries can also contribute to group longevity because they provide new incentives for group members and potential recruits. Non-material incentives such as a sense of purpose and solidary can be key for mobilisation. Once a violent rival appears in the picture, an additional purpose also emerges: to defend the group and its supporters from the enemy. The existence of a rival can deepen the bonds between group members.

A fourth way in which rivalries can contribute to terrorist group longevity is in so-called spoiler situations: disruption of peace talks that might otherwise make groups give up violence. Spoiler behaviour often occurs between moderates and extremists, or when a group makes an attack to prevent any concessions to their enemies.

[7] If we take it into account that rivalry is said to be usually fiercest between groups that have similar goals, perhaps one possible explanation to Phillips' finding is that interfiled rivalry is, on average, less intense and thus less likely to lead to a complete annihilation of one of the groups.

3.5 Framing

One way of studying meaning formation in the context of social movements is frame analysis. In his seminal work on framing (1974), Erving Goffman sought to analyse the fluidity of meaning. Central in his analysis are *primary frameworks* – cultural frames upon which shared meanings are built. Understanding the primary frameworks relevant in a given context is necessary for understanding the interpretative processes that are taking place.

Another term Goffman uses is *keying* – the adjustment of these primary frameworks to new situations. Although primary frameworks may suggest strong cultural determinism, they are constantly reinterpreted and modified. Among mechanisms that are of particular interest for analysts of social movements are *frame alignment* and *frame resonance*. Frame alignment refers to the seeming linkage between the interests of an organisation and the interests of its potential supporters. Such linkages can emerge in different ways, including frame bridging – the connection of previously unconnected frames – and frame transformation – changing prior frames to better match the needs of the organisation.

Whereas frame alignment is usually an outcome of a strategy chosen by an organisation, frame resonance, on the other hand, refers to the effects that messages have on audiences. Resonance depends on the saliency and the credibility of the message. These qualities are also strongly influenced by accumulated history.

4 Northern Ireland

In the 1971 census[8], the population of Northern Ireland was about 1.5 million, of which approximately 31 % were Roman Catholic, 27 % were Presbyterian, and 22 % were affiliated with the Church of Ireland[9]. Protestants are mostly unionist, while the majority of Catholics are Irish nationalist.[10]

Northern Ireland came into being through the partitioning of Ireland with the Government of Ireland Act 1920. It consists of six of the nine counties that belong to the province of Ulster. The remaining twenty-six counties seceded from the United Kingdom in 1922, first as the Irish Free State within the British Commonwealth. The new constitution of Ireland came into force in 1937, and in 1948 the Irish government announced it was severing all ties with the Commonwealth, thus officially becoming an independent republic.

The creation of Northern Ireland was accompanied by widespread communal violence and harassment, suffered especially by Catholics. IRA was also trying to destabilise and undermine the statelet. During the Irish War of Independence (1919–1921), the IRA carried out a campaign of guerrilla warfare, which unionists saw as illustrating what life would be like for them in a united Ireland.

The British government did not regard partition as a permanent solution. A Council of Ireland, consisting of representatives from the two Irish Parliaments, was designed to create a united Ireland if that was its mutual decision. The council never met, however. In 1949, Clement Attlee's Labour government passed the Ireland Act that stated that Northern Ireland would remain part of the United Kingdom unless the Parliament of Northern Ireland voted otherwise. This was significant in the sense that for the first time, the power over the destiny of the statelet was transferred to Belfast. This angered

[8] CAIN web service: http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/ni/religion.htm Retrieved 4.4.2017
[9] Church of Ireland identifies itself as both Catholic and Reformed. Differences exist between members in how Catholic or Protestant they consider themselves to be. Church of Ireland is, however, generally identified as a Protestant church.
[10] The term "nationalist" is generally used to refer to an ideology that favours a united Ireland achieved by non-violent means. The more militant strand of nationalism is usually described as "republican". Lower case is being used when the term refers to ideology, upper case when it refers to a specific organisation or its members.

nationalists, both north and south of the border, because in their view this effectively created a unionist veto on the question. Northern nationalists in particular were disappointed, for they had hoped that the Labour government would work towards ending partition.

In 1956, the IRA launched its border campaign, which lasted until 1962. The campaign was a failure above all because it lacked popular support from the Catholic population. Despite their lack of support for IRA's actions, however, Catholics within Northern Ireland had a host of grievances, especially in terms of employment, education, housing and representation on public bodies. In local government elections there was still a property-based electoral system. It applied to everyone regardless of religious background, but Catholics were naturally disadvantaged because of their lower socio-economic status. One of the clearest examples of discrimination was the gerrymandering of local government boundaries to ensure unionist control everywhere. (Hennessey 2005, XI-XIII)

4.1 Civil Rights Movement and the Split in Republicanism

In the early 1960s, several civil rights groups emerged that aimed to challenge discrimination and civil rights violations in Northern Ireland. One of these was the Campaign for Social Justice, launched in January 1964. It aimed to influence British political opinion and avoided nationalist rhetoric. Patricia McCluskey, one of the campaign's founders, explained that the reason why demands were directed at Westminster was that "we cannot, for example, remember a time in their forty-odd years of rule when the unionists conceded anything of consequence which the opposition in Stormont asked for. Thus we decided that all our resources should be given over to publicity outside Ireland." (Hennessey 2005, 108) The problem for the Campaign for Social Justice was how to tackle the reluctance of the British to intervene in Northern Ireland.

The Northern Irish Civil Rights Association (NICRA) was established in 1967. It consisted predominantly of individuals outside of the republican movement. Among the members of its steering committee were representatives from the Campaign for Social

Justice, but also from organisations like Belfast Trades Council, the Communist Party of Northern Ireland, the Belfast Wolfe Tone Society and the Northern Ireland Labour Party. The objectives laid out in NICRA's constitution were the defence of the basic freedoms of all citizens; the protection of the rights of the individual; the highlighting of all possible abuses of power; the demanding of guarantees for freedom of speech, assembly and association; and the informing of the public of their lawful rights. (Hennessey 2005, 129)

At first, NICRA focused its efforts on petitioning and lobbying. These activities did not yield any significant results, and in the summer of 1968 NICRA decided to organise its first protest march from Coalisland to Dungannon, where the council was accused of housing discrimination. Despite the fact that the marchers were faced by unionist counter-protesters led by Reverend Ian Paisley, the protest did not turn violent.

In Londonderry, the Derry Housing Action Committee (DHAC), founded in early 1968, had begun to mount public protests against Londonderry Corporation's housing policy, but had not gained much publicity for their efforts. The committee was a loose alliance of local republicans, local members of the Northern Ireland Labour Party (NILP), and a few others. DHAC had taken part in the march organised by NICRA, and they invited NICRA to coordinate a new march in October, this time into the walled city centre of Londonderry. After the march was publicised, loyalists announced that they were also going to hold a march on the same day, at the same time, and over the same route. At this point, William Craig, Stormont Minister for Home Affairs, banned all marches and parades at the proposed route. (Hennessey 2005, 137-138)

Civil rights campaigners, however, decided to defy the ban. At first, NICRA was unwilling to adopt civil disobedience as a tactic, but after lengthy discussions between organisations, the activists decided that the march should proceed as planned. By defying the ban, some of the more radical activists in the DHAC wished to provoke the police into an overreaction in order to create wide publicity and draw support for their cause. (Ó Dochartaigh 2005, XiV-XV)

In the afternoon of 5th of October, the protesters gathered at Waterside Railway Station in order to march to the Diamond, the central point of the city. The crowd grew to over

2000, and it included politicians such as Eddie McAteer, then Leader of the Opposition at Stormont, and several Westminster MPs.

The police reacted exactly the way the radicals had hoped they would. Violence began when the march headed for a street that was declared out of bounds. At first, the police used loudspeakers, ordering the crowds to disperse, and when the orders went unheeded, they used batons and water cannon to break up the march. Violent skirmishes broke out. A report on the disturbances later confirmed that RUC officers had used violence in a manner that was both excessive and indiscriminate:

> *There is a body of evidence, which we accept, that these police also used their batons indiscriminately, and that the District Inspector in charge used his blackthorn with needless violence. Rapid dispersal of the crowd was also assisted by the use of water wagons which were moved along Duke Street and then along Craigavon Bridge. There is no real doubt that they sprayed the dispersing marchers indiscriminately, especially on the bridge, where there were a good many members of the general public who had taken no part in the march. There was no justification for use of the water wagons on the bridge, while the evidence which we heard and saw on film did not convince us of the necessity of their use in Duke Street.* (Cameron 1969, para. 51)

Repression resulted in three days of rioting. (Ó Dochartaigh 2005, XV) The events in Londonderry are widely regarded as the beginning of the Troubles, a conflict during which approximately 3500 people were killed.[11] Although the absolute number is relatively small compared to many other violent conflicts, it is rather significant when considered against the total population of Norther Ireland. Almost half of the population (and 80 % in some areas) personally know someone killed or injured in the conflict. (Alison 2009, 56) The primary armed parties in the conflict were Republican paramilitaries, unionist paramilitaries and British security forces. The IRA and other Republican paramilitaries were responsible for approximately 58 % of the deaths. The majority of the persons killed were either civilians (52 %) or members of British security forces (32 %).[12]

[11] CAIN web service: http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/sutton/tables/index.html Retrieved 4.4.2017.
[12] CAIN web service: http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/sutton/tables/Status_Summary.html Retrieved 4.4.2017.

The beginning of the Troubles also led to a split in republicanism. The disagreements were mostly about the use of violence, the abstentionist principle and the leftist turn that the IRA had taken. In 1969, those dissatisfied with the "old" IRA left the organisation to form what came to be known as the Provisional IRA (or later, as they gained power, simply IRA).

Recruitment to the Provisional IRA happened in two great waves. The first big group consisted of "the Belfast Sixty-niners", i.e. those who had joined the IRA in the wake of the riots of August 1969. Another surge came after the internment operation of 1971 and Bloody Sunday in 1972, when British forces opened fire on a civil rights demonstration, killing 13 and wounding another 13. (Moloney 2007, 204) Although the active membership of the Provisional IRA apparently never exceeded a few hundred at any one time, it is estimated that during its history, over 10 000 individuals were active in its ranks. (Bosi & della Porta 2012, 366)

5 United States

In the United States, the issues that were particularly central in the activities of the civil rights movement of the 1960s were racial inequality and the Vietnam War.

The Vietnam War had begun in 1955. The involvement of the United States increased significantly in the early 1960s and peaked in 1968. First demonstrations against the United States' involvement in the war took place in 1964. Anti-war movement grew and became stronger in late sixties.

Racial equality was another highly current issue. The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom – where Martin Luther King gave his well-known "I Have a Dream" speech – was held in August 1963. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 ended segregation in schools and workplaces and made it illegal to discriminate against someone on the basis of their ethnicity or gender. In the same year, Freedom Summer, a volunteer campaign aiming to get as many black voters registered as possible, took place in Mississippi. During the project, volunteers were harassed, intimidated and beaten, and four civil rights workers were killed. In states like Mississippi and Alabama, white supremacist groups had connections to the police and were acting with impunity. By mid-sixties, the moderate, reformist activism aiming towards racial integration was challenged by the more confrontational Black Power movement. The Black Panther Party for Self-Defense (BPP) was founded in 1966.

More confrontational tactics also began to occur in anti-war protests. In October 1967, Stop the Draft Week demonstration in Oakland turned violent. Demonstrators overturned cars and threw bottles, tin cans and stones at the police. The police used clubs and chemical spray to disperse the crowds. However, these early manifestations of violence amongst white activists were still random acts.

Events such as the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy (In April and June 1968), police violence against demonstrators and Richard Nixon's victory in the presidential elections of 1968, which was followed by the intensification of USA's involvement in Vietnam, increased the sense of urgency and a perception of overall inefficiency of non-violent activism.

5.1 Students for a Democratic Society

Students for a Democratic Society developed from an organisation called Student League for Industrial Democracy (SLID). The latter was the youth branch of an organisation called the League for Industrial Democracy (LID). LID, in turn, had its roots in the Intercollegiate Socialist Society, a socialist student organisation founded in 1905.

In January 1960, the SLID changed its name into Student for a Democratic Society. In June 1962, 59 people gathered in Port Huron, Michigan to complete the mission statement of the organisation. In its initial form, SDS was a liberal organisation explicitly committed to the principle of nonviolence. This commitment is made quite clear in the Port Huron Statement:

> *In social change or interchange, we find violence to be abhorrent because it requires generally the transformation of the target, be it a human being or a community of people, into a depersonalized object of hate. It is imperative that the means of violence be abolished and the institutions – local, national, international – that encourage nonviolence as a condition of conflict be developed.* (Students for a Democratic Society 1962, para. 23)

The content of the Port Huron Statement is reformist rather than revolutionary. The statement calls for ending the Cold War through measures such as "universal controlled disarmament" and “gradual diminishment of the NATO forces”. (Ibid., paras. 100, 111) It also calls for greater democracy in the United States through realignments producing "two genuine parties [that] shall supplant the current system of organized stalemate” (Ibid., para 122), the creation of citizens' lobbies, curbing of corporate power in politics, and reorganisation and expansion of the public sector.

In its early years, the activities of SDS comprised mostly of non-confrontational student activism – demonstrations, campaigning, debates, sit-ins, teach-ins and community projects. SDS members tended to come from middle-class and upper-middle-class families. Majority of them were from the East coast and mostly from the cities. Relatively many of them were Jewish.

SDS grew gradually. Events such as the escalation of the Vietnam War and the increase of draft calls in 1965 resulted in spikes in SDS recruitment. As the escalation continued and the number of Americans stationed in Vietnam increased, SDS began to shift its focus toward Vietnam. The anti-war movement became stronger among university students. Following the launching of the Tet Offensive in January 1968, American citizens viewed U.S. involvement in Vietnam in an increasingly negative light.

One particularly formative time in the development of the organisation was that in the spring of 1968, when student protests peaked both in the United States and in many other countries around the world. In April 1968 there was a student strike in which about one million American students took part. At Columbia University, where SDS was very active, the protesters had also several specific demands related, firstly, to the institutional affiliation the university had with the Institute for Defence Analyses (IDA) and secondly, to a controversial construction plan at Morningside Park.[13]

Because of their aftermath, Columbia protests were deemed as a success. The university severed its ties to the Institute for Defence Analyses and dropped its plans regarding the controversial gym.

5.2 SDS Split

Tensions between factions of SDS increased during 1969. Disagreements over goals and tactics became obvious and significant:

> *At almost all of the chapters I visited from the fall of 1968 to the summer of 1969, SDS members wanted to know more about the Action Faction-versus-Praxis Axis split that had transpired at Columbia before the [student] strike. I always replied that only after the go-slow talkers and intellectuals were thrown out of leadership was the chapter able to take actions that provoked the victory at Columbia.* (Rudd 2009, 144)

[13] One of the problems the protesters had with the plan was that it was seen as segregationist: the building – a gymnasium – was to have two entrances: one for the (predominantly black) members of Harlem community and another one for the (predominantly white) Columbia students. The entrance for Harlem community members was at the back of the gym while the door for the students was a grand entrance at the front of the building.

Use of violence was not the only issue over which members were divided. Starting in the mid-sixties, the Marxist-Leninist Progressive Labor Party had begun infiltrating SDS with its members. According to PLP's most central article of faith, it would be the workers that would make the revolution. Students, according to the PLP line, were bourgeois and privileged, and would only be of use if allied with the working class. Because of this, PLP initially directed its recruitment efforts at members of the industrial working class. After several years of ineffectual organising attempts, however, PLP decided to look to the student ranks, chiefly to SDS, where recruitment possibilities seemed more promising. At times they gained control of several important campus chapters, and considerable influence within the organisation as a whole. Their goal was to push their political line, but also to recruit members out of SDS into the party. PLP also tried to build "worker-student alliances" on campuses, but failed to create any lasting ones.

As a result of PLP's focus on the proletariat, their views on race and nationalism were a further issue that separated them from others in the SDS. PLP did not view racism as a system of oppression in its own right. For them, the struggle of the blacks against racism was, in practice, merely the struggle of one sector of the working class. Racism, according to this reasoning, was simply a trick of the ruling class used to divide the workers. PLP did not support the Black Panthers or the Black Power movement in general. In a similar vein, PLP argued that all Third World nationalisms were a harmful diversion from class struggle.

Due to its dogmatism, PLP received criticism and even ridicule from others. Russell Neufeld, who went on to join the Weather Underground, recalls the Harvard PLP chapter arguing that "there's no such thing as black culture and white culture [but] only working-class culture and bourgeois culture." "It occurred to me," he said in an interview years later, "that you could only say that in Harvard Yard." (Varon 2004, 46)

According to Mark Rudd, it was the because of the influence of the PLP that other SDS members became convinced that they needed a revolutionary theory of their own to counter that of the PLP. They found one in "exemplary violence", propaganda of the deed that they believed would cause further radicalisation and increase SDS membership. (Rudd 2009, 143-144) Drawing on the thoughts of Régis Debray, the members of this

faction believed that the Cuban revolution had special relevance for the United States. Debray stressed that the revolution was not brought about by a mass movement but by a small number of guerrillas attacking military and political targets. It was the guerrillas' violence that eventually stirred up a mass revolt. In Debray's writings, they discovered an alternative to slow basebuilding and a reason for engaging in violence. Since this violence was thought as exemplary, it did not need to result in immediate tactical victories. (Varon 2004, 57) Another way in which the faction aimed to distinguish itself from the PLP was its focus on youth instead of working class in general. The adherents of this approach dubbed themselves Revolutionary Youth Movement (RYM). It was around this faction that the Weather Underground would later be born.

5.3 Weather Underground

In the spring of 1969, eleven SDS members affiliated with RYM composed a statement titled "You Don't Need a Weatherman to Know Which Way the Wind Blows". With the statement, the RYM members aimed to challenge PLP's power in the organisation by pointing to what they saw as PLP's faults: its narrow focus on the industrial proletariat, its refusal to support the Black Panthers and Vietnam's National Liberation Front, and its opposition to RYM's focus on youth. (Varon 2004, 49)

The statement appeared in a special issue of *New Left Notes*, SDS's publication, printed for the organisation's National Convention that took place in Chicago in June. As predicted, discord between the two dominant factions was notable at the convention. One reporter observed:

> *SDS isn't the free and open, free form group it once was. [...] Increasingly it is bedeviled by the incomprehensible, Marxist sectarianism which wrecked the old left, as people calling themselves Maoist and Leninist tussle over abstruse, revolutionary metaphysics in a social atmosphere that is depressingly Stalinoid and paranoid.* (Varon 2004, 49)

David Gilbert describes the situation in a very similar way:

> *The factional fighting was ferocious. Every single detail, even the order of the agenda, was cause for battle. As so often happens in these situations, positions were rationalised in objective terms, to*

> *appeal to swing voters, when the real reasons were factional advantage.* […] *Political struggle got reduced to name-calling.* (Gilbert 2012, 118)

At the convention, RYM supporters portrayed PLP as anathema to everything SDS stood for. PLP was expelled from the organisation. There was no organisation-wide vote on the question. On the other hand, even if a formal vote had been taken, the outcome would probably have been the same, since vote rigging apparently happened in the context of other questions:

> [T]*he first day of the convention was taken up with procedural questions. In these votes we in the NO [National Office] faction were surprised that PL had much more strength than we expected. In fact, they won several votes simply by gaining the support of independents who voted solely on the merits of the issues, not on factional lines. This meant that we, the Revolutionary Youth Movement leadership, didn't represent a majority of the delegates.* […] *The opening procedural votes were so close and swung back and forth so much that on the second day, I later learned, the National Office staff doing the counting began fooling with the numbers, adding or subtracting votes as needed to produce anti-PL results. So much for the democracy part of Students for a Democratic Society. Ends and means had long ago become blurred.* (Rudd 2009, 149)

On the following day, elections for national officers were held. RYM leadership and their supporters, known at this point as the Weatherman, were now in charge of SDS's national office and *New Left Notes*. Many rank-and-file SDS members, however, could identify neither with Weatherman nor PLP, and drifted away from the organisation. In practice, SDS dissolved as a national organisation.

During the summer of 1969, the Weathermen made preparations for turning their Debrayist ideas into practice. In keeping with the principles of *foco*-theory, which called for the creation of small groups guided by a central leadership, the Weatherman set up collectives in cities like New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Seattle, Detroit, and Chicago.[14] The leadership of the Weatherman – the "Weatherbureau" – was based in Chicago. (Varon 2004, 57)

[14] Some of the collectives had been established by RYM at the beginning of the summer, before the formal creation of Weatherman in June. (Varon 2004, 57)

5.4 Black Panther Party

The Black Power movement emerged in the mid-1960s, when a new generation of activists rejected the reformist and integrationist approach of the civil rights movement. Probably the most important of organisation in the movement was the Black Panther Party, founded by Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale in Oakland, California in October 1966. Compared to the well-mannered activists of the civil rights movement, the Panthers were bold and audacious. Assata Shakur describes her first impressions of the organisation:

> *The sheer audacity of walking onto the California senate floor with rifles, demanding that Black people have the right to bear arms and the right to self-defence, made me sit back and take a long look at them.* […] *Panthers didn't try to sound all intellectual, talking about the national bourgeoisie, the military-industrial complex, the reactionary ruling class. They simply called a pig a pig. They didn't refer to the repressive domestic army or the state repressive apparatus. They called the racist police pigs and racist dogs.* (Shakur 1987, 203)

During its first year or so, the BPP was a regional organisation that worked to protect and serve the local black community in the San Francisco Bay Area. The membership of the organisation grew rapidly after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. in April 1968. By 1969, the BPP had several thousand members[15] in forty chapters. (Johnson 1998, 391) The organisation had various programs and projects, including free breakfast programs for poor school children, free health clinics, liberation schools and community patrols.

The organisation had an elaborate structure of ranks, with specific responsibilities for leadership and other members. Since the beginning, Huey P. Newton held the position of minister of defence, the most important position in the organisation. Bobby Seale was the chairman and the second-in-command. Chapters were mostly organised by state, and chapters were divided into branches by city. Within the branches there were sections, and

[15] According to Bobby Seale, the organisation had approximately 5000 members in late 1968, 3000 in February 1971 and 1250 in early 1973. However, most academic and journalistic estimates of BPP's membership are lower. (Johnson 1998, 410)

within the sections there were subsections. All policy decisions were made by the Central Committee. However, chapters sometimes organised without the consent of the committee, and instructions sent from the Oakland headquarters were not always uniformly followed. (Austin 2008, 36-37)

Ever since its founding, the BPP also had a clandestine wing. One of its key functions was simply to provide assistance to members wanted by the police. According to Akinyele O. Umoja, BPP's clandestine units formed a loose network, "with autonomous cells in different cities that were referred to by different names at different times". (Umoja 2006, 227) These units were all a part of a whole known as the Black Liberation Army. By 1968, the official rules of the organisation stated that party members were not allowed to join "any other army force other than the Black Liberation Army". (Ibid.: 227)

5.5 Black Panther Party Split and the Black Liberation Army

By 1969, the party had gone through tremendous growth, and internal bickering had become a problem. There were chapters that called themselves Black Panthers but did not have any kind of actual relationship to the leadership in Oakland. In some cases, members of these chapters agreed to go to headquarters to familiarise themselves with party policy and central principles, but others refused and continued operating on their own, often involving themselves in operations that discredited the party. In early 1969, the party began a nationwide purge, sending party leaders to different locations to expel undesirable members. The purge, however, turned out to have adverse impact on the party. (Austin 2008, 287–288)

The question of armed struggle was central in the split that eventually took place in 1971. In the eyes of the more radical members of the organisation, the national leadership had become reformist rather than revolutionary, while the increased repression led many to believe that creating an underground vanguard was vital. Newton and his followers believed that while violent revolution was inevitable, community organising should be the overriding concern.

Just like in the SDS, there was disagreement within the party over the question of who would be leading the revolution. Newton and his followers believed it should be the working class, while Cleaver believed it would be the "lumpen proletariat" – the outcasts of society. (Austin 2008, 297) His view was shared by Deputy Minister of Defence Geronimo Pratt, according to whom:

> *"One of the most ideal urban guerillas comes from the life on the street (the fast-life, night-life, slick-life, etc.) They have been down, have hustled, played con. What we do is contain that energy, point it in the right direction and make them beautiful communist revolutionaries."* ("Interview with L.A. P.O.W's" 1972, 9–10)

Disagreements over distribution of resources also fuelled internal conflict. Chapters were required to give a certain percentage of paper sales and other income to the headquarters to cover the expenses of organisational maintenance. Members began to feel exploited when rumours emerged that Newton was living in a luxurious penthouse apartment in California.

Disagreements were particularly severe between the leaders in Oakland and the chapter in New York. In early 1971, the incarcerated members of the New York chapter (the "Panther 21"[16]) published an open letter to the Weather Underground, expressing solidarity to the latter and criticising the leadership of the BPP:

> *We wish to make known to you that we feel an unrighteous act has been done to you by the self-proclaimed "vanguard" parties by their obvious neglect in not openly supporting you.* […] *But they have ignored us also.* […] *These "omnipotent" parties are throwing seeds of confusion, escapism, and have lost much of their momentum by bad tactics*[.] ("That Panther 21 Letter" 1971, 4)

The statement of the Panther 21 reflected the sentiments of many members. Because of the open letter, however, Newton expelled the entire Panther 21 from the organisation. More purges were to follow. Eldridge Cleaver, the head of the international chapter in Algeria, publicly called for the reinstatement of the expelled Panthers in New York and

[16] The 21 members were charged and tried for attempted murder and attempted arson and for planning to bomb several police stations, a railroad yard, Queens Board of Education office and the Bronx Botanical Gardens. All members were eventually acquitted of all charges.

Los Angeles and the resignation of the chief of staff David Hilliard, to which Newton responded by expelling the entire international chapter.

BPP splintered into a group loyal to Newton, centered in Oakland, autonomous Panther collectives across the country, and the Cleaver faction based in New York, members of which would form the new BLA. In 1972, the FBI described the BLA as "a loosely knit, unstructured, quasi-military group, composed of small guerrilla units employing the tactics of urban guerrilla warfare." (Rosenau 2013, 183) Their view is confirmed by Assata Shakur, according to whom "the Black Liberation Army was not a centralized, organized group with a common leadership and a chain of command". (Shakur 1987, 241) Instead of a structured, hierarchical organisation, there were several collectives working independently of each other.

The Oakland-based splinter group continued their reformist path with prominent members entering electoral politics in 1973.[17] Within a couple of years, the Oakland BPP received federal and foundation funding, while the counter-insurgency operatives continued putting pressure on the radicals. By 1975, the radical factions had no presence aboveground, and their chances of building a wider revolutionary base were slim. (Rosenau 2013, 186; Umoja 1999, 143)

[17] Elaine Brown ran – unsuccessfully – for the Oakland city council in 1973 and again in 1975. Bobby Seale ran – also unsuccessfully – for Mayor of Oakland in 1973.

6 Personal Narratives on Political Protest

In this section I will look into the two cases from the perspective of social movement theory. The section deals with diffusion, interaction between movements and authorities, intra-movement interaction, interfield rivalry, framing and resources.

6.1 Diffusion

As described earlier, there were many similar factors behind radicalisation in Northern Ireland and the United States. In fact, all of the six former militants also acknowledge this fact in their autobiographies. Struggles in each location were never seen as separate battles disconnected from everything that took place elsewhere in the world. For Kieran Conway, becoming a republican was not a question of personal grievances – he was a middle-class student living comfortably in Dublin – but a natural outcome of what was going on in the world in the late sixties:

> *I started college in the autumn of 1968 against the backdrop of student revolts in the US, France and Germany and, to a much lesser extent, Britain. Students were awake to politics, and the world's unfairness, at least abstractly. The message was shifting from taking dope and dropping out to revolution.* […] *After Prague, there was as little sympathy with Moscow's perceived Soviet imperialism as with Washington's more standard version, though Castro, Mao and Ho Chi Minh remained revolutionary heroes.* (Conway 2014, location 114, chapter 1, para. 13)[18]

The student movement in the United States was a particularly influential one, but it was also influenced and inspired by others. Former Weather Underground members mention a good number of countries and conflicts that inspired them in one way or another. Mark Rudd even mentions a case of dialogue of sorts between student activists on opposite sides of the Atlantic:

> *Throughout May and June, we were intensely aware of the revolutionary events taking place in France.* […] *Young factory workers joined with students in the streets in one of the most surprising events of our time—a spontaneous revolution in an advanced industrial capitalist country. At one point it seriously*

[18] I have used the Kindle edition of Conway's book. Since the text can be resized on screen, Kindle books have "location numbers" instead of page numbers. This is why I cite the location number, the chapter and the paragraph of Conway's book. More information: http://www.edukindle.com/2008/08/page-number-versus-position-on-kindle/ (accessed 27.1.2017)

> *looked as if the government of France would fall. We went wild when we saw on the front page of a newspaper a picture of a French student carrying a sign with just two words: COLUMBIA, PARIS. This was confirmation that we were a recognized and significant part of a worldwide revolution. One day Strike Central received a telegram from the Sorbonne University in Paris: WE'VE OCCUPIED A BUILDING IN YOUR HONOR. WHAT DO WE DO NOW? I don't remember our answer.* (Rudd 2009, 113)

In each location, there were underlying factors that were local by nature. However, protests in other countries – typically by people of the same age group and socioeconomic status – were a catalytic factor that generated similar behaviour elsewhere.

6.2 Interaction between Movement and Authorities

The relationship between a social movement and the state is a highly central factor for the understanding of the emergence of political violence. As mentioned, Northern Ireland and southern United States had many similar characteristics in the 1950s and 1960s. Both were peripheries where minorities were, with the approval of central governments, de facto excluded from participating in the political decision-making process. From largely similar socio-political settings, two civil rights movements were born in the 1950s and 1960s. These movements had very similar aims and tactics.

6.2.1 Concessions

Gianluca De Fazio has tried to explain the aforementioned difference in the outcomes of protests by studying what he terms *legal opportunity structure* (2012). In his definition, the structure is composed of three dimensions: accessibility to courts, availability of justiciable rights[19], and receptivity of the judiciary toward a social movement's claims. (Ibid., 6)

In all three regards, the situation was better in the United States than in Northern Ireland. As to access to courts, costs and questions of legal standing were an obstacle for civil rights litigation in Northern Ireland. An even greater obstacle, however, was the lack of justiciable rights. In United Kingdom, there was neither a written, formal constitution nor

[19] A right is justiciable if it is capable of being decided by a court.

any legislation comparable in this regard to the United States' Bill of Rights[20]. According to legal scholars:

> *the most obvious explanation for this failure of law and lawyers [to advance civil rights in Northern Ireland] was the absence of any formal guarantees in the British and Northern Irish constitution of basic civil rights and the consequent lack of any tradition of civil rights litigation. This is in direct contrast to the situation in the United States. […] where such formal guarantees are included in written constitutions and have been relied in court actions. The part played by the United States Supreme Court in the development of civil rights is well known.* (quoted in De Fazio 2012, 13)

As to judiciary receptivity, the Supreme Court's decisions became increasingly liberal in the 1950s and early 1960s, representing "the zenith of judicial receptivity" for the civil rights movement in the United States. By contrast, judiciary in the United Kingdom was essentially conservative and relatively hostile to any civil rights claims. (Ibid., 13–14)

In the United States, litigation opportunities and significant legal reforms dampened protests and directed participation towards nonviolent forms of action. Significant judicial rulings reinforced the perception that change was possible. In Northern Ireland, where opportunities to pursue civil rights through litigation were extremely limited, activism soon shifted towards more confrontational forms of protest.

As to the anti-war movement, one factor that significantly dampened protests in the United States was the end of conscription.

6.2.2 Protest Policing, Backfire and Covert Tactics

Authorities were accused of harassment, excessive violence, arbitrary arrests and infiltration in both United States and Northern Ireland. In both cases, what emerges from activists' accounts is that further radicalisation took place as a result of treatment that was perceived as unjust.

[20] United Kingdom does not have a written constitution but an uncodified one comprising a host of laws and principles. The English Bill of Rights was passed in 1689, about a hundred years before that of the United States. Its content, however, is much more limited.

Rudd describes the police operation that ended the first occupation of Columbia:

> *Each commune had chosen its own tactics, ranging from barricades and passive resistance to cooperation with the police by submitting to arrest. […] In the end police randomly, arbitrarily beat those who cooperated as well as those who resisted. In some cases all the demonstrators from a certain room were made to run a gauntlet of cops who beat them with clubs and blackjacks. […] Some of the worst police violence was directed not against the occupiers but toward the people assembled outside the occupied buildings. Police attacked the Green Armbands, faculty members, bystanders – even the Majority Coalition jocks who were there to cheer them on. Surprise! Clearly identified medical volunteers were beaten as they tried to help the injured.* (Rudd 2009, 86-87)

Almost identical first-hand accounts of police violence were given by civil rights activists like Bernadette Devlin (1969, 98–99) in Northern Ireland.

There is an important difference in the wider outcomes of protest policing and other measures taken by authorities in each context, however. In Northern Ireland, there were incidents that clearly resulted in backfire. Maria McGuire describes the effects of the internment that began in August 1971:

> *The British also picked up Civil Rights activists and other figures who were popular in the Catholic population, even though they may have actively and publicly opposed the use of force. The anger that these arrests in particular caused was of great help for the Provisionals. The British could have thought of no more effective way of helping to recruit members for the Republican movement if they had tried.* (McGuire 1973, 22–23)

In their foolish and short sighted dealing of the situation, the British in fact did a great service for the Provisional IRA. Tommy McKearney's verdict is very similar to that of McGuire:

> *In the ensuing hysteria, the Provisional IRA was almost overwhelmed with the flood of recruits. In County Tyrone, for example, Republicans had been relatively slow to respond to the split in 1970. By mid-1971, while the Provisional IRA had established a basic skeleton organisation in the county, they were still a minority in comparison to the Official IRA. […] By Christmas 1971, that number had increased at least ten times, and the leadership's biggest problem in the area was not finding manpower but accessing sufficient arms to equip its newly*

> *recruited fighting units. The story was repeated throughout working-class Catholic areas across the Six Counties.* (McKearney 2011, 85)

Another incident that strengthened the Provisionals was the Bloody Sunday in January 1972. According to McKearney:

> *[T]he result of the massacre was to incapacitate the mass movement of peaceful protest. At a stage when it could have led to a widening and deepening of the mass struggle, the shootings of Bloody Sunday curtailed street protest for a number of years. The negation of the mass movement, to be replaced with a focus on armed struggle dovetailed with other aspects of historical development. A large number of Northern Irish Catholics believed that the British Army action on Bloody Sunday was not accidental but was designed to channel anti-government mobilisation into a single arena that its military could deal with: armed conflict.* (McKearney 2011, 86)

McKearney's view is consistent with that of Donatella della Porta, who writes that "repressive, diffuse, and hard techniques of policing tend to, at the same time, discourage mass and peaceful protest while fueling the most radical fringes". (della Porta 2006, 80)

The outcome of the Bloody Sunday is especially interesting considering that a very similar incident took place in the United States in May 1970, when the Ohio National Guard fired on protesting students at Kent State University, killing four and injuring nine. The incident was highly exceptional also in that the victims were white[21]. The shootings led to a country-wide student strike and both violent and nonviolent protests. What it did not result in, however, was mass recruitment into militant groups. At this point, the Weather Underground was underground, where it was isolated and unable to capitalise on Kent State shootings. Mark Rudd describes the situation in May 1970, when he, a former protest leader, could only passively follow the events through media:

> *Meanwhile, I was sitting on a park bench in Philadelphia's Rittenhouse Square, thrilled as I read about all this [the protests] in the New York Times. […] Yet here I was, hiding out, completely cut off from the protests. I didn't even dare walk the few blocks to join the demonstrations at the University of Pennsylvania campus for fear of being identified and arrested by police or federal*

[21] Only ten days later two black students were shot dead by police in Jackson, Mississippi. Compared to Kent State shootings, the incident received little attention in the media.

> *agents watching the crowd. […] Terry, Diana, and Ted, all excellent student organizers, were now dead*[22]*, and the rest of us were unable to function in the mass movement. It was not widely known that Kent State, a school that drew from the sons and daughters of Ohio tire and auto workers, had been one of Weatherman's bases. […] In some measure, the militancy of the university's Cambodia demonstrations resulted from confrontational politics that Weatherman had helped create at Kent. Reduced to only reading about the mass student protests gripping the country, I was feeling nothing but isolated and powerless.* (Rudd 2009, 209-210)

David Gilbert's recollections of the time are very similar to those of Rudd:

> *What better moment could there be for an organization that had envisioned a Revolutionary Youth Movement and sought to give it anti-racist leadership? But all we could do was watch as the events unfolded on the mass media. I had only been underground for a month; collectively we were barely two months past the catastrophic townhouse; our concentration on the demanding task of going under meant that we had no capacity for playing a role in this massive rebellion. Our passivity at that moment felt excruciatingly frustrating.* (Gilbert 2012, 161)

Isolation had rapidly led into a situation in which the group was mostly just existing underground, although this is not to say that they did not act at all. In fact, it was only a few weeks after the Kent state shootings that the Weather Underground released a declaration of war against the government. In the declaration, the group mentioned Kent State shootings, the Cambodian campaign and the "attempted genocide against black people" and announced it would be attacking "a symbol or institution of Amerikan [*sic*] injustice" within two weeks. A few days past the stated deadline, the group bombed New York City police headquarters. Due to a phoned-in warning, no one was killed or seriously injured.

Despite this activity, the situation was rather different from that in Northern Ireland. To put it differently, the outcomes of the shootings in each case were partly very similar, but

[22] Theodore Gold, Diana Oughton and Terry Robbins were accidentally killed on March 6, 1970, when a bomb they were making blew up in a townhouse in Greenwich Village, New York. The group had intended detonate the bomb at a dance at the army base Fort Dix. Had the attack been successful, it is likely that it would have resulted in civilian casualties.

also partly opposite. In Northern Ireland, the Bloody Sunday weakened the nonviolent civil rights movement and strengthened the Provisional IRA. In the United States, the outrage at the Kent State shootings resulted – in the short term – in demonstrations, riots and student strikes, but did not swell the ranks of militant organisations. According to Gilbert, Kent State shootings took place at a time when the mass movement was beginning to subside, and if anything, the shootings increased passivity and resignation:

> *The turning point for the broader counterculture came in the wake of Kent State. The first response was massive protests and heightened militancy. But after a while, especially when that outpouring didn't produce instant change in who wielded power, the reality sunk in that the government was willing to kill white kids too, and over the next couple of years many youth shifted away from political struggle and into utopian communities and forms of magical thinking*[23]. (Gilbert 2012, 194)

According to Gilbert, the various counterculture communes clearly became more about retreat – "not just to the countryside but also from opposing the system". (Ibid.) This phase of declining mobilisation was characterised by an increase in views emphasising the ways to achieve change without struggle.

A further significant reason behind the aforementioned difference between Northern Ireland and United States was the covert activity of the FBI. The counter-intelligence program COINTELPRO targeted anti-war groups, civil rights groups and Black Power groups. The program began in 1956, and its initial aim was to disrupt the activities of the Communist Party in the country. In the 1960s, the program was extended to include a number of other groups. The aim of the program was to increase internal disagreements and to disrupt and discredit the activities of these movements and their leaders. Tactics included infiltration, arbitrary arrests, surreptitious mail-opening, phone-tapping, spreading of misinformation, anonymous letters, break-ins, beatings and assassinations.

From early on, the bureau also made use of other, quite creative ways to impair the public image of the organisations. According to an undated document, it was "believed that the "cuckoo angle" inherent in the NL [New Left] can be exploited from a counterintelligence point of view". In practice, this tactic meant emphasising "the strange collection of

[23] By "magical thinking", Gilbert means different forms of spirituality.

hippies, drop-outs, hop-heads and plain nuts that cling to the NL, appear at most of their "functions" and are greatly attracted by the news media". (Federal Bureau of Investigation (n.d.[c]), 4)

According to a communication sent in July 1968, the program's New York office had requested permission to "draw up a montage, leaflet size, showing photographs of New Left individuals (using the worst looking)". The montage would also bear a message reading, "We are the SDS. If we lead will you follow?" The idea was to circulate the montage on campus. The bureau authorised the suggested action and added that the montage should be submitted to the bureau before distribution. (Federal Bureau of Investigation (n.d.[d]), 99)

The bureau also made efforts to create injurious misunderstandings and to increase disagreements and antagonism between organisations and movement sections. In a communication sent in October 1968, program's New York office wrote:

> *Enclosed herewith are two copies of a suggested letter designed to create disruption between the New Left and the black student power forces. This letter was written in the jargon of the New Left, necessitating the use of a certain amount of profanity. Bureau authority is requested to prepare and mail (anonymously), the enclosed letter to individuals and organizations in the New Left and black student power movement.* (Federal Bureau of Investigation (n.d[d]), 28)

The letter, ostensibly written by a Jewish SDS member, accuses individual black activists of antisemitism – a grave accusation especially considering that the number of Jewish activists in SDS's ranks was relatively high – and urges SDS leaders in New York's campuses to "wake up". (Ibid., 29–30)

In 1970, the bureau ordered investigations of every member of the SDS and of "every Black Student Union and similar group regardless of their past or present involvement in disorders." (US Senate 1976a, 8–9) New files were opened on thousands of individuals. According to the former head of FBI intelligence, the information gathered could be used in case they ever applied for a government job. (Ibid.)

According to Mark Rudd, it was a combination of internal dynamics and external pressure that first led to the decision to go underground and eventually resulted in isolation and further radicalisation of the Weatherman members:

> *Many* […] *harassment arrests, plus constant surveillance by the police and other agencies, caused us to turn inward in our small circles, our collectives. After the Days of Rage, each collective tried to prove its revolutionary worth, perhaps sensing that a move underground was coming. […] We were now a classic cult, true believers surrounded by a hostile world that we rejected and that rejected us in turn. The more people left because they were fed up and unable to continue under the brutal collective and hierarchical system, the more our resolve was strengthened.* […] *The rest of the movement hated us, which only confirmed the rightness of our path.* (Rudd 2009, 184)

In 1969, the Black Panther Party experienced internal rifts that led to expulsion of important members like Eldridge Cleaver. Although the discord within the party was not created solely by COINTELPRO operations, they definitely made it worse.

The COINTELPRO program specifically targeting "Black Nationalist Hate Groups" was instituted in 1967. According to a communication sent to all offices in August 1967, the purpose of the new counterintelligence endeavour was "to expose, disrupt, misdirect, discredit, or otherwise neutralize black nationalist, hate-type organizations and groupings, their leadership, spokesmen, membership, and supporters". (Federal Bureau of Investigation (n.d.[a]), 3) Field offices were specifically instructed to exploit all instances of discord within and between groups and to make use of media contacts:

> *No opportunity should be missed to exploit through counterintelligence techniques the organizational and personal conflicts of the leaderships of the groups and where possible an effort should be made to capitalize upon existing conflicts between competing black nationalist organizations. When an opportunity is apparent to disrupt or neutralize black nationalist, hate-type organizations through the cooperation of established local news media contacts* […] *attention must be given to the proposal to insure the targeted group is disrupted, ridiculed or discredited through the publicity and not merely publicized.* (Federal Bureau of Investigation (n.d.[a]), 4)

After the Black Panther Party grew into an organisation of country-wide significance, FBI's field offices were instructed to create "imaginative and hard-hitting counterintelligence measures aimed at crippling the BPP". (US Senate 1976a, 88)

In a memorandum sent in December 1968, authorisation was requested for actions "involving the mailing of two letters in the names of a fictitious and a deceased person". The first letter would be addressed to someone[24] in the Peace and Freedom Party, and it was to bear the signature of "a fictitious, Spanish-sounding name". (Federal Bureau of Investigation (n.d.[b]), 153) The writer would introduce himself as a Mexican who is trusted by BPP members, and would then claim that he has "learned from BPP members that certain whites in the PFP who get in the way of the Panthers will be dealt with in a violent manner". (Ibid.) The stated objective of the action was to cause create a breach between the two organisations. PFP had been providing support and money to the BPP.

The second suggested action was to submit a subscription request to the BPP newspaper in the name of a "deceased Negro formerly residing in Los Angeles". According to the plan:

> *The letter will be addressed to the BPP in San Francisco, California, and will coincidentally contain an envelope purportedly used in soliciting donations for the defence of Huey P. Newton and Leroy Eldridge Cleaver, BPP officials. A dollar bill will be placed in the preprinted envelope for the Newton Cleaver Defence Fund, making it appear the envelope was inadvertently sent to the BPP in San Francisco, rather than Los Angeles. The desired effect would be the give the BPP in San Francisco the impression that funds are being collected in Los Angeles for Newton but that the money is being pocketed by Los Angeles Panthers.* (Federal Bureau of Investigation (n.d.[b]), 153)

According to another memorandum sent in December 1968, "the factional disputes within the BPP locally [in Chicago] continue". It was suggested that the situation should be exploited:

> *Chicago recommends that* [name omitted] *be advised in an anonymous letter from a "disgusted Black Panther" of the many past organizational affiliations of BROWN and to a lesser degree of RUSH and HAMPTON. The writer would indicate an*

[24] Name omitted.

> *acquaintance of several years with BROWN and RUSH and would characterize them as opportunists and hustlers, out for their own personal gain.* […] *It will also be alleged that BROWN and RUSH are sex perverts, the public knowledge of which could prove embarrassing to the image of the BPP. The letter would be handwritten, addressed to* [name omitted] *and would be in street language, with appropriate use of obscenities.* (Federal Bureau of Investigation (n.d.[b]), 114)

Although the existence of tactics such as infiltration and phone tapping were known by party members at the time, according to Assata Shakur, no one really knew just how wide-ranging FBI activities actually were:

> *Nobody back then had ever heard of the counterintelligence program (COINTELPRO) set up by the FBI. Nobody could possibly have known that the FBI had sent a phony letter to Eldridge Cleaver in Algiers, "signed" by the Panther 21, criticizing Huey Newton's leadership. No one could have known that the FBI had sent a letter to Huey's brother saying the New York Panthers were plotting to kill him. No one could have known that the FBI's COINTELPRO was attempting to destroy the Black Panther Party in particular and the Black Liberation Movement in general, using divide-and-conquer tactics. The FBI's COINTEL program consisted of turning members of organizations against each other, pitting one Black organization against another.* (Shakur 1987, 231–232)

A senate committee report on FBI's covert action against the party stated that "although the claimed purpose of the Bureau's COINTELPRO tactics was to prevent violence, some of the FBI's tactics against the BPP were clearly intended to foster violence, and many others could reasonably have been expected to cause violence." (US Senate 1976, 188) For instance, in order to increase animosity between the party and a street gang called Blackstone Rangers, the bureau sent an anonymous letter to the latter's leader, falsely telling him that the Chicago Panthers had "a hit out" on him. The purpose of the letter was to provoke the gang to take reprisals against the Panthers. In a similar vein, in California, the bureau initiated a covert operation to increase dissension in the party. The operation included measures such as sending party members anonymous letters and caricatures that ridiculed the local and national leadership. A further aim was aggravate an already existing conflict between the party and an organisation called the United Slaves (US). The conflict resulted in the killing of four Panthers by members of the US and in numerous beatings and gunfights. The report states that "FBI officials were clearly aware

of the violent nature of the dispute, engaged in actions which they hoped would prolong and intensify the dispute, and proudly claimed credit for violent clashes between the rival factions[.]" (Ibid.)

Precisely as in the case of Weather Underground, FBI's counter-intelligence actions were the primary reason BLA members went underground, but being underground significantly limited their opportunities to act:

> *At the end of the sixties or the beginning of the seventies, it seemed like people were going underground left and right. Every other week I was hearing about somebody disappearing. Police repression had come down so hard on the Black movement that it seemed as if the entire Black community was on the FBI's Most Wanted list. The repression had come down so fast that many people had no chance whatsoever to get organized.* (Shakur 1987, 234)

Largely due to the counter-intelligence program, both American organisations suffered from what Donatella della Porta calls *encapsulation*, i.e. isolation from the rest of the movement and from society in general. A further outcome of encapsulation is *implosion*, which is "characterized by the compartmentalization of structures, strategic radicalization, and ideological abstractness". (della Porta 2006, 134) This kind of development is likely to result in a weakening or a complete collapse of the organisation:

> *Although a decision to go underground reduces the risk of being arrested, it also reduces the opportunity for action. Once taken, this decision makes the group a closed system, with very few outside contacts. Its members have little chance to withdraw, and thus their choice takes on a life of its own, independent of the activists' initial goals.* (della Porta 2006, 112)

According to David Gilbert, COINTELPRO and the move underground caused radical groups to lose contact from one another, which significantly weakened all of them:

> *The Black liberation movement had been our most direct source of inspiration and political leadership, but underground we had much less contact – for most of us it was none at all – with revolutionary Black groups or with Native, Latino/a, or Asian organizations either. In the wake of the withering COINTELPRO attacks on revolutionary nationalists, and especially after the split of the Panthers, the spearheads for radical change and activism throughout U.S. society had been considerably blunted.* (Gilbert 2012, 196)

In the United States, the Federal Bureau of Investigation succeeded in weakening radical groups through various kinds of covert operations.

6.3 Intra-movement Interaction: Fragmentation and Rivalry

Movement fragmentation and rivalry took place in both Northern Ireland and the United States. The outcomes, however, were different.

As the report of the commission headed by Lord Cameron noted, the people who gathered to protest in Derry on 5 October 1968 "represented most of the elements in opposition to the Northern Ireland Government". (Cameron 1969, para 45) According to Tommy McKearney, "underlying differences and divisions within the wider civil rights movement were grounded in the complexities of Northern Irish society with middle-class Nationalists, largely working-class republicans and a small but determined bunch of socialists all trying to guide the movement in their favoured direction." (McKearney 2011, 38) This kind of grand coalition was bound to fracture.

The more radical groups believed that by using provocative tactics, they would be able to create a situation in which the moderate leaders of the civil rights movement would look like fools, thus giving radicals a central role within the movement. Moderate civil rights leaders, on the other hand, were fearful of losing control over the movement, and began adopting confrontational tactics, despite their initial fears that they would result in widespread sectarian violence between the two communities.

As previously mentioned, demonstrating commitment to the cause by using violence can result in violent outbidding, in which other groups and individuals feel the need to resort to violence in order to remain relevant. When the civil rights coalition began to fragment in 1969, the IRA was the first group to take up violence. The IRA, on the other hand, was just as fractured as the civil rights movement was. After the failure of the 1956 – 1962 border campaign, the new chief of staff, Cathal Goulding, had been trying move the organisation away from militarism and towards developing broader left-wing politics. Resources were not concentrated on buying arms, let alone on sending any into troubled

areas up north. However, to many republicans in places like Belfast, this was sheer madness. After the riots of August 1969, a group of veteran IRA members and younger supporters confronted the leadership, arguing that the Dublin-based leadership had failed to protect Catholics in Northern Ireland and betrayed the republican tradition.

It has also been suggested that the split happened because the "forties men", who had not been active in the IRA during Goulding's leadership, were afraid that "the republic was going to be got without them". (Prince & Warner 2013, 279) Violence was used to make sure that it would be impossible to reach a lasting solution without the new splinter group being a party to the deal. The creation of the Provisional IRA was, in other words, the outcome of a typical spoiler situation. (Ibid., 280)

After the split in December 1969, the two groups began to compete over support. Their rivalry had a further radicalising effect on the situation. The Provisionals incited street riots with the deliberate intention of ending the good relationship between the British forces and the Catholic community and to marginalise their rivals. In the spring of 1970, the Officials still condemned "hard-liners" for provoking "incidents which could only lead to sectarian strife". By June, however, it became obvious that the Official IRA had also adopted militancy in order to stay relevant. (Ibid., 283–284)

Internal struggles for leadership were incited further by Stormont's wavering between concessions and repression. Every move made by authorities incited speculation over tactically wisest ways to react. As Maria McGuire writes in her memoirs, potential concessions made groups nervous because of the perceived danger of losing relevance:

> *We knew that our campaign against Stormont and the British was on the brink, in early March, of producing a major change from the British government. […] It was likely that the initiative would include some form of concession to the demands for civil rights with which the entire present campaign had started. At that point, would the SDLP present itself as the true representatives of the Nationalist population, accept the reforms on its behalf, and leave us with no political standing? […] These fears governed many of our actions both before and after the introduction of Direct Rule in the Six Counties.* (McGuire 1973, 99)

As described earlier, it was fierce internal rivalry that brought about the demise of SDS right when mass protest peaked. Disagreements were over the use of violence and over

the definition of the actors that would have the leading role in making the revolution. The organisation became tangled in factional, jargon-laden quarrels that disillusioned many members and repelled newcomers.

Within the Weatherman faction, attitudes hardened, and individuals arguing for peaceful activism were increasingly dismissed as "liberal fence-sitters". Rudd's description of a peace rally in August 1969 is quite revealing:

> *I was among a contingent of several dozen New York Weathermen who marched up onto the stage at a rally commemorating the twenty-fourth anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. We elbowed aside the surprised organisers from the Fifth Avenue Peace Parade Committee and seized the microphone. Jeff Jones* […] *commenced a rant at the several thousand peace protesters assembled. "It's not enough to be for peace, like the liberals who organised the rally; you've got to be for revolution. And that revolution will be violent, so get ready." As he continued, the audience just drifted away; we had destroyed the rally more effectively than any right-wing counterdemonstrations or government agents might have.* (Rudd 2009, 168)

In October 1969, the Weathermen tried to put their idea of exemplary violence into practice by organising a four-day event called the Days of Rage in Chicago. It was promoted with the slogan "Bringing the War Home". Participation in the Days of Rage was nowhere near as wide as the organisers had expected it to be. Only a few hundred people turned up each day, vastly outnumbered by police officers every time[25]. On the second day, the Illinois governor, Richard Ogilvie, called out 2 500 National Guard troops. Almost 300 Weathermen – about half of all the protesters – were arrested during the Days of Rage, mostly on charges of "disorderly conduct" and "mob action." At least twelve protesters were charged with assault or aggravated battery. Over 800 automobile and 600 residential or store windows were smashed. (Varon 2004, 82)

[25] The only exception to this was a march of approximately 2000 people on 10th of October. It, however, was not organised by the Weathermen but by the Revolutionary Youth Movement II, which had, by then, become a rival.

The Days of Rage did not yield the gains the Weatherman members had expected. Many found the Days of Rage pointless and counterproductive. Fred Hampton, the leader of the Chicago Black Panthers, denounced the actions of the Weathermen:

> *We support RYM II only. We oppose the anarchistic, adventuristic, chauvinistic, individualist, masochistic, and Custeristic Weathermen. We don't dig confrontations that lead people into struggles they're not ready for.* (Rudd 2009, 173)

In Hampton's view, rioting was likely to alienate potential supporters and increase police oppression[26]. He complained to reporters that the Days of Rage were not revolutionary, and that "going out on the streets and getting people shot, killed and maimed is insanity". (Varon 2004, 84)

The negative reaction to the riots significantly impaired the relations between the Weathermen, other SDS factions and the reformist faction of the Black Panther Party. However, the leadership of the Weatherman faction was unwilling to admit failure. At a meeting that took place two weeks later, the events were deemed a success, the beginning of "the war against pigs". (Rudd 2009, 180) Rudd recalls he felt somewhat uneasy about the conclusions drawn, but did not feel confident enough to question them:

> *At one point a timidly mentioned the huge disparity between our predictions of how many would come to Chicago – fifteen thousand at our most optimistic moments – and how few actually showed up.* […] *Terry took my question as an attack. "*[…] *Of course it'll start small; how many white radicals in our out of SDS are actually revolutionaries? People are so bought off with white-skin privilege that it's amazing that so many came." […] Had I opposed the line, I would be repudiating all that I'd fought for over the last year, plus I would be turning my back on my comrades, for whom I felt a deep loyalty.* […] *Where else would I go, whom else would I join with? So I backed down, "No, I was just concerned with how we could have been so wring in our estimates." My question fell like a lead weight. No one picked it up.* (Ibid., 181)

As the quote shows, the Weatherman faction had at this point began to show signs of internal dynamics characteristic to all cliquish, hierarchical groups of "true believers". It was at this particular meeting where the decision to go underground was made. Street

[26] Hampton himself was murdered in his bed less than two months later by the Chicago Police Department.

violence was deemed to be a tactic too unsustainable and costly. A plan was made to abandon SDS, take the Weatherman group underground and continue with clandestine attacks. Rank-and-file members were not consulted on the decision. Some collectives were closed and others strengthened by moving people around.

The Black Panther Party splintered for reasons largely similar to those behind the SDS split. The most significant fault line was that between militants and reformists. In the eyes of the more radical members, Newton and Party Chief of Staff David Hilliard were backing away from the development of an armed clandestine vanguard at the very moment repression was forcing Panthers underground. The international section and the factions of New York and Los Angeles all favoured armed struggle. The radicals ceased to recognise Newton and the Oakland faction as a genuine revolutionary organisation and began referring to them as "the Peralta street gang" (after the street where the Oakland Panthers were located). (Umoja 1999, 142)

Further disagreements considered the questions of race, class and nationality. At its inception, the BPP had defined its ideology as revolutionary nationalism, and the New York faction had close relations to other black nationalists. Around 1970, however, Newton began distancing himself from this position and argued for the idea of intercommunality, the main point of it being that nations and nationalism ought to go out of the window. This caused a lot of confusion and anger among the membership. Matters were not helped by the fact that Newton was not particularly good at presenting his arguments. Assata Shakur disliked both his views on nationalism and his way of expressing them:

> *Politically, I was not at all happy with the direction of the Party. Huey* [Newton] *went on a nationwide tour advocating his new theory of intercommunality. The essence of the theory was that imperialism had reached such a degree that sovereign borders were no longer recognized and that oppressed nations no longer existed, only oppressed communities, within and outside the U.S. The problem was that somebody had forgotten to tell these oppressed communities that they were no longer nations. Even worse, almost no one understood Huey's long speeches explaining intercommunalism.* […] *His rambling for three hours about the negation of the negation was sheer disaster.* (Shakur 1987, 225-226)

What was possibly even more detrimental, however, was the lack of trust. The national leadership was suspect of corruptness, cynical opportunism and of exploiting the organisation for their personal benefit:

> *Although there wasn't much dissension in the New York branch, there was beaucoup dissension and disunity on the national level. Every other weekend somebody was going out to the West Coast to deal with "contradictions". Everybody was uptight and miserable. And then everything started to happen at once. First there was an article stating that Huey was living in a $650-a-month apartment in Oakland. The Harlem branch was shocked because, in those days, that was a whole lot of rent and it contrasted sharply with the living conditions of the Panthers in New York.* […] *The Party issued a statement that Huey was living in the apartment for "security purposes", but a lot of Panthers were not at all convinced.* […] *Then came the long series of expulsions, which proved to be the last straw.* (Shakur 1987, 230)

In the United States, movement fragmentation and rivalry did not result on violent outbidding. By espousing violent confrontation in the form of "exemplary violence", Weatherman did not succeed in radicalising others but, on the contrary, alienated both former allies and previously unaffiliated, potential supporters. For obvious reasons, BPP and BLA emphasised the defensive nature of their violence. Because of internal feuding, however, a great proportion of this violence was targeted towards other organisations and street gangs. BPP and BLA never gained the support of the majority of black citizens, most of whom preferred the nonviolent, reformist line of Martin Luther King. Due to bad leadership and massive egos, the Panthers eventually faded into insignificance.

6.4 Interfield Rivalry

In Northern Ireland, the radicalising effect of interfield rivalry was obvious from the early civil rights marches onwards, when Loyalists reacted by organising their own marches. As described earlier, violent interfield rivalry often gives groups an additional purpose: to defend the group and its supporters from the enemy. This factor is very clear in many accounts given by former volunteers. According to Lorenzo Bosi (2012), for those who joined the Provisional IRA only after 1969 and without previous political involvement, it

was the events on the ground that greatly influenced their decision to join. A former volunteer describes his reasons for joining:

> *I got involved here through the burning of Bombay Street, and through that I became involved with the people who were burnt out. I had no Republican ideas whatsoever at that time. I chose then the Provisional IRA out of threat and because to me they were capable of doing something.* (Ibid., 366)

A particularly influential character in the Loyalist counter-movement was Reverend Ian Paisley, who incited and led the opposition to the civil rights movement from the beginning. Paisley's oratorical skills made him a powerful opponent to the civil rights cause. What is particularly interesting about Paisley is that his activism in Northern Ireland was also influenced by desegregation and its opponents in the United States.

Among the figures leading the attack of the right-wing Christian fringe on the civil right movement and desegregation in the United States were Reverend Carl McIntire of Collingswood, New Jersey, and the three Jones generations in charge of the Bob Jones University in Greenville, South Carolina. Carl McIntire was the founder of the International Council of Christian Churches (ICCC), a separatist and fundamentalist fellowship opposed to the World Council of Churches. McIntire opposed Protestant apostasy, communism and the civil rights movement in the United States, arguing that all three were parts of a common conspiracy. Bob Jones University – a private, conservative university – was founded by evangelist and broadcaster Bob Jones in 1927. The university did not admit black students until 1971. According to Jones, a racially divided society was ordained by God, and "[i]f you are against segregation and against racial separation […] then you are against God Almighty". (Jordan 2011, 46)

Paisley's ordination took place in 1946. During the first decade of his ministry, he was relatively uninterested in politics. Closer to his heart were anti-ecumenism, Irish Protestant apostasy and the fundamentalist American doctrine. Paisley met McIntire in 1951 and entered correspondence with him. According to Richard L. Jordan (Ibid., 41–42) Paisley clearly admired McIntire and emulated his confrontational tactics. McIntire's activities included organising protests against the visits of clerics from the communist bloc to the United States and various protests against the civil rights movement and the voting rights legislation. In 1962, Paisley met Bob Jones Jr. He became a frequent speaker and visitor to the university, receiving an honorary doctorate in 1966.

Over the years, cooperation between Paisley and his American allies was wide-ranging. When Paisley was imprisoned in June 1966 for three months, McIntire sent a telegram to Queen Elisabeth II, demanding his release. McIntire and Bob Jones, Jr. were also among a group of ministers who visited Belfast, taking part in Free Presbyterian church services and visiting Paisley in prison. In 1967, Paisley's visit to North America grew into a five-week tour that involved eighteen churches and six Bible conferences. (Ibid., 50–52) There is little record of the exact content of his speeches. However, his views on American civil right matters come across quite clearly from articles published on *Revivalist* and the *Protestant Telegraph*[27]. In an article published in September 1967, Paisley extolled Governor Lester Maddox of Georgia as courageous Christian leader. Maddox was a fierce segregationist who had chased black activists from his restaurant in Atlanta in 1964, waving both an axe handle and a revolver. (Ibid., 44) He later chose to close his restaurant rather than serve blacks. After Martin Luther King's death, the *Protestant Telegraph* published four articles attacking his legacy, stating, for instance, that "King's preaching and life led to violence. His so-called 'non-violence' produced the worst sort of violence." (Ibid., 55)

In the end, however, American segregationists were unable to defeat the civil rights movement. 1960s saw steady improvement in the form of Civil Rights Acts of 1960, 1964 and 1968 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. By the end of the decade, even states like Mississippi and Alabama had yielded to federal authority.

Meanwhile, when the NICRA began marching in Northern Ireland, the fiercest opposition came from Paisley and his followers. Their attempts to physically stop civil rights marches altogether were rather extreme even compared to the approach of Paisley's closest American allies and indicated a sense of urgency. Jordan presumes that it was perhaps Paisley's awareness of the success of the American civil right movement that led him to think the local movement should be crushed immediately and by any means necessary. (Ibid., 56)

To sum, in the United States, the counter-movement lost and became proportionally small long before the political protests peaked in the end of the decade. In Northern Ireland,

[27] Both publications were founded by Paisley.

Paisleyites and other Loyalists became a significant counter-movement that had a great impact on the conflict's escalation.

In the United States, there was no interfield rivalry comparable to that in Northern Ireland. There were white supremacist groups, and several black organisations were formed specifically to defend black communities. Interfield rivalry did not, however, reach the same lethal intensity of attacks and counter-attacks as in Northern Ireland.

6.5 Framing and Resources

I have chosen to look into framing and resources under the same headline, because the two are so closely intertwined. That is, successful framing tends to result in resources – supporters, members, allies, guns, money. This fact is quite clearly demonstrated in an account given by Maria McGuire:

> *Like the Officials, we were quite ready to play for all they were worth the new Republican myths that were being created out of the current campaign. And nowhere was it easier to capitalise on them than in the United States, where whole communities of Irish-Americans were watching the struggle in the Six Counties like spectators at a Morality Play, with right and wrong, good and evil, delineated in black and white.* […] *There should be copious references to the martyrs of 1916 and 1920–1922 – the period most of the audience would be living in. Anti-British sentiment, recalling Cromwell, the potato famine, and the Black and Tans, could be profitably exploited. By no means should anything be said against the Catholic Church. And all references to socialism should be strictly avoided – tell them by all means that the Ireland we were fighting for would be free and united, but say nothing about just what form of the new free and united Ireland would take.* (McGuire 1973, 108)

According to McGuire, it was the relative simplicity of the Provisionals' approach that appealed to her as well. In her view, it was one of the merits of the Provisionals that they were not very academic. After deciding to join the IRA, she attended a meeting of the Officials but was put off by their long, theory-laden debates:

> *[W]hen I sat down I soon realised that this organisation – I had by now heard the word "Official", but still did not appreciate its significance – was not for me. The discussion was of world revolution, and I was interested in the revolution in Ireland; I also*

> *had the impression that the people there thought they could achieve revolution without using force. When I asked a question about the Six Counties, I was told that I had to look at the struggle there in the larger context of the world socialist revolution. I could see that the meeting was heading for a long, analytical discussion on the theory of revolution and it reminded me only too clearly of university, where people talked and talked, and never achieved anything. I left.* (McGuire 1973, 18)

Partly related to this was the image of the Provisionals as ingenuous and honest "old boys". A key strength for the PIRA was the history of its older members in the republican movement, a factor which translated into practical experience, important connections, prestige, and ultimately, weapons:

> *[A]n insurrectionary movement must have access to a basic arsenal in the first place and thereafter have the ability to activate long-standing and well-placed networks of people capable of accessing weapons in quantity and shipping them back to base. The capability to do so requires the use of carefully acquired and cultivated contacts in the various fields of arms sales and transatlantic transport. No organisation acquires that type of expertise and range of contacts overnight. In those crucial days of 1970, the Provisional IRA, with people in the US who had been sending arms to Irish Republicans from as far back as the 1920s, was able to deliver what people believed they needed: guns and ammunition.* (McKearney 2011, 72)

Weapons were also acquired from closer to home. According to McKearney, the organisations' resources grew significantly after the events of August 1969 and the backfire that ensued:

> *[I]n this atmosphere, support for "the people of the North" came from Southerners of different political backgrounds.* […] *With feelings running so high in the South, Nationalists and Republicans from different parts of Northern Ireland began to search out any contact they could find in the Republic and ask for guns. The response was astonishing, as weapons of varying ages and quality, sporting guns as well as military weapons, were unearthed from the most unlikely of places and sent north. Veteran Republicans in the Provisional IRA drew on old contacts to conduct a concerted trawl of guns. The IRA had not been a large successful organisation since the 1920s, but its many attempts at insurrection had created an extensive old boys' network of former prisoners and retired IRA activists.* (McKearney 2011, 62)

Provisional IRA also received money, weapons and training from other revolutionary groups in Europe and from Palestinians and Libya. (McGuire 1973, 110; Moloney 2007, 3–4)

Members of SDS and Weather Underground came from middle class and upper class families and received financial support from their parents (in some cases even after going underground), but aside from that and the donations given by sympathisers, the Weather Underground did not have resources comparable to those of the IRA. From many accounts given by former members, it becomes very clear that the organisation lacked not only weapons but at times even basic resources for merely sustaining themselves underground. Some worked in blue-collar jobs, turning their salaries over to the collective. (Varon 2004, 57) According to Rudd, however, having a job was not common:

> *Very few people had the time or inclination to work at jobs. The collectives supported themselves, in a manner of speaking, through individual contributions from the members' savings or quite often from their indulgent or lied-to parents (staged weddings were common). A handful of collectives with more working-class members and therefore fewer family resources developed elaborate burglary and fencing operations, however. To the leadership this was a sign of the "proletarianization" of our organization.* (Rudd 2009, 161)

Jonah Raskin was a sympathiser who assisted the fugitives. Thinking back decades later, he is somewhat critical of the way sustaining the underground drained away resources that could have been used elsewhere:

> *[T]he underground network became an end in itself. Literally, the feeding, the housing and the caring for the mental health and physical well-being of the fugitives became a full-time job that drained energy away from political organizing against the war and for women's groups and in support of men and women in prison.* […] *The underground depleted valuable movement energy and resources.* […] *For the fugitives, surviving day-to-day was a big deal. Not getting caught by the FBI was a big deal. But that day-to-day vigilance seems to have militated against any sort of long-term plan or vision.* (Raskin 2006, 132)

Raskin's comment highlights the aforementioned encapsulation-implosion process in which the mere existence underground tends to become a struggle in its own right, shifting the focus away from the group's initial goals.

The main reason for the lack of money and guns is that what the organisation also lacked was a good story. Whereas the civil rights movement and the anti-war movement were mass movements with relatively moderate demands and a broad support base, the Weatherman alienated many potential supporters with their poor choices of framing. The group claimed to embody the promise of a freer and fairer society, but the actions and the rhetoric of its members often contradicted this claim. Weatherman embraced "politics of transgression", the essence of which was to attack all conventional values and commonly shared sensibilities. The group held its last public meeting, called "the War Council" in December 1969, in Flint, Michigan. What was striking about the meeting was the extreme, aggressive rhetoric used. One particular debate concerned the question whether killing white babies could be considered inherently revolutionary, since all white people were the enemy. (Rudd 2009, 189) American women with white children were denounced as "pig mothers". (Varon 2004, 159)

The most infamous speech of all was probably that given by Bernardine Dohrn. Referring to Charles Manson and his gang's murder of actress Sharon Tate, her unborn child, and the La Biancas, Dohrn exclaimed: "Dig it; first they killed those pigs, then they ate dinner in the room with them, then they even shoved a fork into pig Tate's stomach. Wild!" (Rudd 2009, 189) For the remainder of the gathering, Weathermen saluted each other with four fingers held up in the air to represent the fork left in Tate's abdomen.

Extolling mindless brutality made certain sense against the backdrop of politics of transgression and the fierce desire to shock "honky America". Compared to black radicals, Weatherman's white, middle-class activists had relatively few means of representing themselves as the "incubation of your mother's nightmare", as one of the members phrased it. (Rudd 2009, 189) However, as Jeremy Varon points out, Charles Manson was "a product of white culture, whom the Weathermen could rally around to code their rebellion as genuinely menacing and, through their tortured mediations, narrow their distance from black radicals". (Varon 2004, 164)

The results of this posturing were, however, not quite what the Weatherman had hoped for. By glorifying brutality and mindless violence, the Weathermen displayed the very same characteristics they were ostensibly opposed to and condemned their enemies for. The majority of all left-wing activists were staunchly against the use of violence as a strategy, and many accused the group of corrupting the core values of the left. Weatherman was denounced as "everything from self-indulgent fools living out Bonnie-and-Clyde fantasies to 'left-wing adventurists' hopelessly cut off from 'the masses'." (Varon 2004, 3) According to anti-war activist Carol Brightman, the meeting in Flint was "grotesque, but it was like theater, [because] it didn't seem related to anything real". (Varon 2004, 161) She surmised the Weathermen were merely trifling with identities they had neither the means nor the intention of turning into reality. One journalist concluded his column on the meeting with "I wanted to write an article on how to think about Weatherman. It can't be done." (Ibid.)

The accidental townhouse explosion in March 1970 was a watershed moment for the group. Despite all the fierce rhetoric used, many of the members were shocked by the event, and it made them rethink both the ethical limits of their actions and the methods used. As a result of this revaluation, Weather Underground decided to engage in actions of "armed propaganda", which meant targeting buildings and taking precautions to make sure not to cause human casualties. At this point it was also recognised that engaging whites was necessary, and that nonlethal violence and conventional propaganda would be more successful ways for achieving this end. However, by the time the Weather Underground reached this conclusion, it was way too small and way too isolated to begin building any kind of movement.

Violence was not, however, the only issue in which the group chose positions that tended to alienate sympathisers. As a key part of their road to revolution, the group aimed to wipe out all vestiges of "bourgeois individualism". (Varon 2004, 57) Monogamy was one of the practices to be rooted out, and to achieve this in their own collectives, couples were split apart and sometimes placed in separate collectives. Monogamous relationships among the leadership were overlooked. According to Mark Rudd, this kind of control over people's personal relationships was detrimental for the entire organisation:

> *Our sexual ideology quickly proved to be disastrous. Smashing monogamy drove many good people out of the collectives. Special*

> *relationships were criticized by the group as being corrupt. Instead of bonding people into a true collective, what we were doing created fragmentation and alienation.* (Rudd 2009, 165)

Uprooting bourgeois individualism also meant that members were to have no personal belongings and could not make any decisions on their own:

> *In the drive to become revolutionary fighters, we tried to jettison our middle-class values, including all personal possessions. Privacy and cleanliness were shed as well: If you had only one set of clothes, how could you wash them? And if you had more, your clean clothes would probably be appropriated by a brother or sister who needed them. […] The collectives determined each person's daily schedule[.]* (Rudd 2009, 161)

A further factor that made life in the collectives psychologically difficult was the frequent use of "criticism-self-criticism". The practice was ostensibly meant to foster personal growth and bonding:

> *The group would choose one person, attacking that individual's work and attitudes with the goal of helping him transform himself into a Communist revolutionary. Individualism, ego, and weakness had to be rooted out. We had discovered this method from Fanshen, by William Hinton, an American who lived and worked in China. The book was required reading in all collectives.* (Rudd 2009, 161)

In reality, the sessions – which often lasted for hours without breaks – tended to increase mistrust between members and to suppress differing views. The practice served the personal interests of assertive individuals and often amounted to bullying:

> *In practice, almost all our criticism/self-criticism sessions were horrendous. Whatever the collective ideal, our practice was still permeated by the dominant culture of competitive individualism. So instead of being a loving, constructive process, most of our sessions were marred by efforts to pull people down in order to gain a higher rung in the hierarchy.* (Gilbert 2012, 124)

The practices used by the group were, in other words, by and large reminiscent of the methods of brainwashing and social control used by cults everywhere. Looking back decades later, Rudd also acknowledges this fact:

> *I did not realize at the time that we had unwittingly reproduced conditions that all hermetically sealed cults use: isolation, sleep*

> *deprivation, demanding arbitrary acts of loyalty to the group, even sexual initiation as bonding. It's strange that these practices can arise without any conspiratorial mastermind or leadership cabal.* (Rudd 2009, 162-163)

The networks and the resources of the black militants were quite different from those of the Weather Underground. According to Gilbert, having middle-class supporters and simply being white were luxuries that made the Weather Underground far less vulnerable compared to black organisations:

> *[W]e could raise money from middle-class friends, while the BLA took its greatest losses doing robberies; we could blend into a much larger and less harassed population; and we were much less prone to routine police stops, and when they did happen, we could talk our way out of them, while Black people faced frequent, hostile stops which, for underground cadres, often led to shoot-outs.* (Gilbert 2012, 196)

In terms of framing, the story of the Black Panther Party and the Black Liberation Army is one of constantly declining prestige and credibility. BPP was at the height of its popularity in the years 1968–1970, after which it splintered and eventually declined to insignificance. As to the BLA and other militant groups in the seventies, Shakur sums up the problem:

> *Sisters and brothers from just about every revolutionary or militant group in the country were either rotting away in prison or had been forced underground. Everyone I talked to was interested in taking the struggle to a higher level. But the question was how.* […] *It became evident, almost from the beginning, that consolidation was not a good idea. There were too many security problems, and different groups had different ideologies, different levels of political consciousness and different ideas about how armed struggle in amerika* [*sic*] *should be waged. On the whole, we were weak, inexperienced, disorganized, and seriously lacking in training.* (Shakur 1987, 241-242)

7 Conclusions

As mentioned, Northern Ireland and southern United States had many similar characteristics in the 1950s and 1960s. Both were peripheries where minorities were, with the approval of central governments, de facto discriminated against and excluded from participating in the political decision-making process.

Activists in each location were fully aware of the international dimension of their protest. Struggles in each location were never seen as separate battles disconnected from everything that took place elsewhere in the world. All of the six former militants also acknowledge this fact in their autobiographies. The student movement in the United States was a particularly influential one, but it was also influenced and inspired by others. Former Weather Underground members mention a good number of countries and conflicts that inspired them in one way or another. It is clear, however, that the American movement influenced that of Northern Ireland more than vice versa.

However, despite the American movement being the more influential one of the two, conflict only escalated in Northern Ireland. The aim of this thesis has been to identify reasons for this by making use of social movement theory and personal narrative analysis.

First of all, compared to United States, it is clear that the opportunity structure in Northern Ireland was closed. In Gianluca De Fazio's definition, legal opportunity structure is composed of accessibility to courts, availability of justiciable rights, and receptivity of the judiciary toward a social movement's claims. In all three regards, the situation was better in the United States than in Northern Ireland. As to access to courts, costs and questions of legal standing were an obstacle for civil rights litigation in Northern Ireland. An even greater obstacle, however, was the lack of justiciable rights. In United Kingdom in the late 1960s, there was neither a written, formal constitution nor any legislation comparable to Bill of Rights. As to judiciary receptivity, judiciary in the United Kingdom was essentially conservative and relatively hostile to any civil rights claims. Since opportunities to pursue civil rights through litigation were extremely limited in Northern Ireland, activism soon shifted towards more confrontational forms of protest. This process was described in very similar terms by Devlin, Conway, McGuire and McKearney.

Secondly, there is an important difference in the wider outcomes of protest policing and other measures taken by authorities in each context. In Northern Ireland, there were incidents that clearly resulted in backfire. Events like the police brutality at the Derry march, Bloody Sunday and the internment enraged large segments of the Catholic population. Harsh tactics weakened the nonviolent civil rights movement and strengthened the Provisional IRA. This kind of outcome is mentioned by Conway, McGuire and McKearney, and it is consistent with backfire dynamics described by della Porta.[28]

Conflict was escalated further by intrafield rivalry, which was described in detail by all autobiographers. The more radical groups believed that by using provocative tactics, they would be able to create a situation in which the moderate leaders of the civil rights movement would look like fools, thus giving radicals a central role within the movement. Moderate civil rights leaders, on the other hand, were fearful of losing control over the movement, and began adopting confrontational tactics.

After the split of the IRA in December 1969, the two groups also began to compete over support. The Provisionals incited street riots with the deliberate intention of ending the good relationship between the British forces and the Catholic community and to marginalise their rivals. The Officials initially condemned their rivals for irresponsibly fuelling sectarian strife, but eventually adopted similar tactics in order to stay relevant.

Interfield rivalry was also intense from the beginning, Reverend Ian Paisley being the most influential demagogue in the unionist camp. The spiral of attacks and reprisals resulted in violence being justified as the only way of defending one's own community. Personal experiences of violence and the idea of "at least doing something" led many previously unaffiliated individuals to join a paramilitary organisation. This is in line with Phillips' findings[29].

As to resources and framing, a key strength for the Provisional IRA was the history of many of its members in the republican movement, which translated into practical

[28] See page 44.
[29] See page 23.

experience, important connections and prestige. Republicans also had an appealing, straightforward narrative that resulted in successful fundraising, especially from Irish Americans. The question of resources is also connected to the fact that the proportional size of the minority was much larger in Northern Ireland, and it was also concentrated to a much smaller area[30]. Because of this, Republicans had entire neighbourhoods sympathetic to their cause, which made it easy to smuggle and hide weapons, money and people.

In the United States, protests peaked in the late sixties, but conflict never escalated. One reason for this is the relative openness of the legal opportunity structure in the country. The Supreme Court's decisions became increasingly liberal in the 1950s and early 1960s. Litigation opportunities and significant legal reforms dampened protests and directed participation towards nonviolent forms of action. Significant judicial rulings reinforced the perception that change by peaceful means was possible. The United States thus lacked the seething mass discontent that was building in Northern Ireland.

Secondly, as to protest policing and movement repression, there were no instances of backfire comparable to those seen in Northern Ireland. In the United States, the outrage at the Kent State shootings resulted – in the short term – in demonstrations, riots and student strikes, but did not swell the ranks of militant organisations. Kent State shootings took place at a time when the mass movement was beginning to subside, and if anything, the shootings increased passivity and resignation. When shootings took place, Weather Underground was isolated underground and unable to capitalise on the public outrage in any way.

However, it would be erroneous to interpret the lack of backfire as an indication of leniency and permissiveness towards the movement. Despite the relative openness of the legal opportunity structure, the Federal Bureau of Investigation had an extensive counter-intelligence programme that was quite successful in weakening and eliminating various organisations and individuals. Operations against Black Power groups were particularly virulent. For both the BLA and the Weather Underground, FBI's counter-intelligence

[30] In 1970, the size of the black minority in the United States was slightly over 11 percent, with percentages varying significantly from one state to another.

actions were the primary reason members went underground, but being underground significantly limited their opportunities to act. Largely due to the counter-intelligence program, both American organisations suffered from isolation from the rest of the movement and from society in general. This kind of development is likely to result in a weakening or a complete collapse of the organisation. Since the operations of the COINTELPRO were covert and even their primary targets were often unaware of them at the time, backfire could naturally not take place. Meanwhile, *overt* repression – the primary prerequisite for public outrage – was in fact relatively mild compared to that seen in Northern Ireland and many other countries at the time.

In the United States, movement fragmentation and rivalry within the movement left many rank-and-file members disillusioned and unwilling to follow any splinter organisation. Once militant organisations had become isolated underground, they were unable to re-establish momentum. Movement fragmentation did not result in violent outbidding. By espousing "exemplary violence", Weatherman did not succeed in radicalising others but, on the contrary, alienated both former allies and previously unaffiliated, potential supporters. Once underground, the group began to show cult-like characteristics. For obvious reasons, BPP and BLA emphasised the defensive nature of their violence, but they never gained the support of the majority of black citizens. There was also no interfield rivalry comparable to that in Northern Ireland. There were white supremacist groups, and several black organisations were formed specifically to defend black communities. However, the opponents of desegregation and civil rights had lost leverage long before protests peaked. Interfield rivalry did not reach the same lethal intensity of attacks and counter-attacks as in Northern Ireland.

None of the American organisations had resources comparable to those of the IRA. From many accounts given by former Weather Underground members, it becomes very clear that the organisation lacked not only weapons but at times even basic resources for merely sustaining themselves underground. Merely existing underground became a struggle in its own right. The main reason for the lack of money and guns is that what the organisation also lacked was a good story. This is partly due to the sheer number of issues. That is, although the various anti-war, Black Power and new left groups had some sort of agreement on most of the basic tenets, their views also differed on so many questions that creating a good, simple, powerful and widely shared narrative was simply impossible.

Compared to republicans in Northern Ireland, American radicals and their sympathisers were quite dispersed both geographically and ideologically, making cooperation difficult especially after the move underground.

What we can gather from all of this is that political violence does not follow from a given level of discontent or repression in any kind of straightforward manner. Recent history, timing, narrative, resources and connections all matter. Issues such as movement fragmentation are not straightforward. Fragmentation can escalate conflict very quickly, but it can also weaken and isolate the organisations involved. The former outcome was seen in Northern Ireland, the latter in the United States.

Comparing the two cases, I argue that the two most significant individual factors affecting the different outcomes in these cases are conflict history and – perhaps even more importantly – the level of trust citizens have in the democratic process. Provisional IRA's ascension was very much connected to the pedigree it had. Long history in the republican movement translated into connections and credibility, which in turn translated into weapons, supporters, information and money. Since the rivalry between the Provisionals and the Officials was a highly relevant factor behind the escalation of violence, it is interesting to think what the outcome might have been like had the "forties men" perceived the situation in a different way. It is, of course, entirely possible that fragmentation would have taken place anyway, but would it have resulted in violent outbidding, that is another matter. Conflict history also made it easy to formulate an appealing and credible message.

As to the level of trust in democracy, in the late 1960s, both Northern Ireland and the United States were characterised by horizontal inequality. In Northern Ireland, however, inequality was not only socio-economic but also more clearly political. This is in line with the research findings presented in the introduction. Had the opportunities to pursue civil rights through litigation been better, trust in the effectiveness of peaceful means would have been stronger also. The demand for violent tactics would not have been significant enough.

In this thesis, I have looked into two relatively old cases of protest movements and political violence. It seems, however, that many of the hypotheses presented here also

hold true for much later examples. Violent protest seems to be more likely to emerge in places where the level of state repression is not the harshest imaginable, but where opportunities to demand change through litigation are nonetheless limited. How state authorities then react to protests has significant impact on whether further radicalisation takes place. Overt, dramatic and widely publicised repression usually backfires, weakening the peaceful segments of the movement while strengthening the radical fringes. Covert tactics and subtler ways of influencing, on the other hand, may be successful in diluting protest and discrediting the radicals in the eyes of the wider public. To induce discord between or within organisations or movements is risky business, for although fragmentation can weaken some or all of the parties involved, it can also escalate conflict significantly. Violence tends to escalate if the conditions are such that there is acceptance of violent tactics among wider population and especially if groups in these conditions end up competing with one another through violent outbidding.

To conclude, I would say that any country's best preventive measure against political violence is to reinforce its legitimacy through genuinely democratic and liberal practices both in its domestic affairs and its foreign relations.

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